In the Name of Allah,
The All-beneficent, the All-merciful

قَالَ تَعَالَى:

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا﴾

Indeed, Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification. (*Sūrah al-Aḥzāb 33:33*)

The most authoritative books on Ḥadīth and Tafsīr (Qur'ānic exegesis), amongst both Sunnī and Shī`ah sources, cite Prophetic traditions that confirm verse 33:33 as being exclusively revealed in relation to the five who were 'covered by the Cloak'; namely Muḥammad, `Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn, (peace be upon them), to whom the term 'Ahl al-Bayt' (People of the House) is specifically attributed.

For instance, refer to the following reference books:

(1) Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH), *al-Musnad*, 1:331; 4:107; 6:292, 304. (2) *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (d. 261 AH), 7:130. (3) Al-Tirmidhī (d. 279 AH), *Sunan*, 5:361 et al. (4) Al-Dūlābī (d. 310 AH), *al-Dhurriyyah al-Ṭāhirah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 108. (5) Al-Nassa'ī (d. 303 AH), *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* 5:108, 113. (6) al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405 AH), *al-Mustadrak `alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* 2:416, 3:133, 146, 147. (7) al-Zarkashī (d. 794 AH), *al-Burhān*, pp. 197. (8) Ibn Ḥajar al-`Asqalānī (d. 852), *Fatḥ al-Barī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 7:104. (9) Al-Kulaynī (d. 328 AH), *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, 1:287. (10) Ibn Bābawayh (d. 329 AH), *al-Imāmah wa'l-Tabṣirah*, pp. 47, H. 29. (11) Al-Maghribī (d. 363 AH) *Da`ā'im al-Islām*, pp. 35, 37. (12) Al-Ṣadūq (d. 381 AH) *al-Khiṣāl*, pp. 403, 550. (13) Al-Ṭūsī (d. 460 AH) *al-Amālī*, H. 438, 482, 783.

For more details, refer to the exegesis of the holy verse involved in the following reference books of *tafsīr*: (1) Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (2) Al-Jaṣṣāṣ (d. 370 AH), *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*. (3) Al-Wāḥidī (d. 468 AH), *Asbāb an-Nuzūl*. (4) Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH), *Zād al-Masīr*. (5) Al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 AH), *al-Jāmī` li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*. (6) Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (7) Al-Tha`labī (d. 825 AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (8) Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH), *al-Durr al-Manthūr*. (9) Al-Shawkānī (d. 1250 AH), *Fatḥ al-Qadīr*. (10) Al-`Ayyāshī (d. 320 AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (11) Al-Qummī (d. 329 AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (12) Furāṭ al-Kūfī (d. 352 AH), *Book of Tafsīr*; in the margin of the exegesis of verse 4:59. (13) Al-Ṭabrisī (d. 560 AH), *Majma` al-Bayān*.

The Philosophy of Visiting the tombs

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ ﷺ:

إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمُ الثَّقَلَيْنِ: كِتَابَ اللهِ وَعِتْرَتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي، مَا إِنْ تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا بَعْدِي أَبَداً، وَإِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ.

The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) said:

"Verily, I am leaving among you two precious things [*thaqalayn*]: The Book of Allah and my progeny [*'itrah*], the members of my Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*]. If you hold fast to them, you shall never go astray. These two will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond [*ḥawḍ*] (of *Kawthar*)."

This holy tradition has been narrated, with different paraphrases, by numerous Sunnī and Shī`ah sources:

Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, *Al-Mustadrak `alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Beirut), vol. 3, pp. 109-110, 148, 533.

Muslim, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, (English translation), book 31, *ḥadīths* 5920-3.

Al-Tirmidhī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, pp. 621-2, *ḥadīths* 3786, 3788; vol. 2, p. 219.

Al-Nassā'ī, *Khaṣā'iṣ 'Alī ibn Abī-Ṭālib*, *ḥadīth* 79.

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol. 3, pp. 14, 17, 26; vol. 3, pp. 26, 59; vol. 4, p. 371; vol. 5, pp. 181-182, 189-190.

Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmi` al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 277.

Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah*, vol. 5, p. 209.

Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-`Aẓīm* , vol. 6, p. 199.

Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albanī, *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah* (Kuwait: Al-Dār al-Salafiyyah), vol. 4, pp. 355-8.

The Philosophy of Visiting the Tombs

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PREFACE

The invaluable legacy of the Household of the Prophet (may peace be upon them all) [Ahl al-Bayt], as preserved by their followers, is a comprehensive school of thought that embraces all branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has produced many brilliant scholars who have drawn inspiration from this rich and pure resource. It has provided the ummah (i.e. the Muslim community) with many scholars whom, following in the footsteps of the Holy Imams of the Prophet's Household (‘a), have done their best to clear up the doubts raised by various creeds and currents within and without Muslim society and to answer their questions. Throughout the past centuries, they have given well-reasoned answers and clarifications concerning these questions and doubts.

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly (ABWA) has embarked on defending the sanctity of the Islamic message and its verities, often obscured by the partisans of various sects and creeds as well as by currents hostile to Islam. The Assembly follows in the footsteps of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and their disciples in its readiness to confront these challenges and tries to be on the frontline in consonance with the demands of every age.

The arguments contained in the works of the scholars belonging to the School of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are of unique significance. That is because they are based on genuine scholarship, appeal to reason, and avoid prejudice and bias. These arguments address scholars and thinkers in a manner that appeals to healthy minds and wholesome human nature.

To assist the seekers of truth, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly has endeavored to present a new phase of these arguments contained in the studies and translations of the works of contemporary Shī‘ah writers and those who have embraced this sublime school of thought through divine blessing.

The Assembly is also engaged in editing and publishing valuable works by leading Shī‘ah scholars of earlier ages to assist the seekers of the truth in discovering the truths which the Ahl al-Bayt School has offered to the entire world.

The Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly looks forward to benefitting from the opinions of the readers and their suggestions and constructive criticism in this area.

The Assembly also invites scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating the genuine Islamic teachings as preached by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ).

We beseech God, the Most High, to accept our humble efforts and to enable us to enhance them under the auspices of Imam al-Mahdī, His vicegerent on the earth (may Allah expedite his advent).

Finally, the Assembly expresses gratitude to Mr. Ahmed Abidi, the author of the present book, and Mr. Agha Ali Reza, its translator. Its gratitude also extends to all colleagues who have participated in producing this work.

Cultural Affairs Department
The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly

INTRODUCTION

Venerating religious patriarchs and leaders is natural for all free-thinking and devout individuals, and this is why graves of renowned saints have, throughout history, been centers of pilgrimage. Until the 11th century of Hegira, the legality of such acts of reverence remained undisputed between the Shīʿah and Sunni schools of Islamic thought. Numerous books regarding this topic have been written by scholars of both sects.

Some of these writings described the issue from a jurisprudential viewpoint, thereby, quoting the oral traditions of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) regarding the legitimacy, rituality and necessary mannerisms of pilgrimage to the holy shrines. Others tackled the topic through logic and philosophy, rationally analyzing its various dimensions.

One of such priceless works is the book entitled *Ziyārat al-Qubūr* (Visitation of Tombs), penned by the famous scholar Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. The value of this book increases many times because the author was not only Sunni, but was also known for his immense skepticism while dealing with almost all intellectual and philosophical issues. However, while writing in detail about this particular question, he has displayed an unusual decisiveness and allowed no hint of uncertainty or doubt to pollute his strain of thoughts.

However, in the 11th century, a man emerged, named Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, who even outdid the likes of al-Rāzī, once called the Leader of Skeptics, in skepticism. It was this man who called into question all pilgrimages to

sacred graves, and subsequently decided them as illegitimate and even heretical. He was of the opinion that such activities were exclusively the Shīʿah's in mentality and practice. Had he seen writings such as this treatise which was authored by one of the most eminent Sunni scholars, he might have refrained from penning such an erroneous opinion.

The only surviving handwritten copy of this text resides at the library of the Sacred Shrine of Fāṭimah al-Maʿṣūmah (the immaculate lady) the daughter of Imam Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar al-Kāẓim (ʿa), and, despite exhausting all possible efforts, we were unable to locate any other copies of this valuable treatise. We, therefore, embarked upon the translation and explanation of this rare piece, the results of which we do most humbly present and dedicate to the holy daughter of Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim (ʿa).

We also believe it necessary to acknowledge the invaluable assistance rendered to us by the respected administrator of the Sacred Shrine, Hujjat ul Islam Haj Aqa Abbasi, and the honorable librarian, Hujjat ul Islam Haj Aqa Ahmediyan, in making available the historic text and the successful completion of this present project.

Ahmed Abidi
Muharram ul-Haram, 1418 A.H.

This is the treatise of "Visitation of Tombs" written by Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī:

In the name of Allah; the Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Imām al-Rāzī, may his grave be sanctified, says:

This is a treatise about the benefits of pilgrimage to sacred graves, and is comprised of four chapters:

Chapter One
Ten Definitive Arguments Proving the Existence of the Intellective Soul

One: Every individual, from the viewpoint of identity,[1] is a constant entity. However, the opposite is true for all the components of his body. This is because the body is spawned by a union between semen and blood, and these two are both hot and liquid in nature. Wherever and whenever heat and liquid come together, a portion of the compound that they form is lost through evaporation. It is because of this continuous loss that the body requires food so as to compensate for the gradual, but constant, depletion of itself. Therefore, the body and its components do not remain in existence indefinitely, but change continuously. From this major and minor premise, we conclude: "An individual, from the viewpoint of his identity, is other than his body."[2]

[1] ***Translator's note***: By using the word *identity*, the author intends to convey the point that an individual's sense of who he is, and how he defines *being himself*, does not change over time under normal circumstances, i.e. a person knows that he is the same person he was yesterday and will continue to be the same person in the future.

[2] ***Translator's note***: This is because it is not possible for a

Two: Sometimes, man loses awareness of all bodies around him, even his own, but remains aware of his existence. Thus, that which he is aware of is definitely different from that which he does not have awareness of.

Three: The faculty of thought (by which we mean the intellective soul) matures and reaches the full blossoming of its potential at the age of forty. However, the body begins its decline at the same age. Therefore, we conclude that the faculty of thought and reason is not bodily in nature.

Four: Studying and pondering cause heat and constipation which pollute the body.[1] However, the same leads to the accumulation of knowledge and, by consequence, growth of the intellective soul. Therefore, the soul is other than the body.

Five: The soul is able to imagine vast mountains and rivers, and by doing so calls these images into its presence. These huge images most certainly need a place to materialize in, but the body is incapable of this feat, for a larger body cannot be accommodated within a smaller one. Thus, the soul must be something other than the body.

Six: Whenever the body accepts a form, it is incapable of accepting another one simultaneously, but the soul can acknowledge multiple forms at the same time. Therefore, the soul cannot be material.

constant to be the same as a *variable*.

[1] ***Translator's note***: The author uses medical information contemporary to himself. However, the point he actually seeks to make is that intense cognitive processes and the stress that generates thereof, causes wear and tear in the human body.

Seven: All human beings attribute their various bodily parts to themselves; e.g. people say, "My brain," "My heart," and "My body." It is only logical to conclude that the "attributed" is other than the "attributed to;" therefore, the soul must be other than the body.

Eight: If the body was the vessel of "knowledge," "strength" and "life"[1] (i.e. these attributes were, in one way or another, material in essence), it would be necessary for all parts of the body to have their own knowledge, strength and life. If this were true, one man would not be one man but would be several men with several lives, several sets of knowledge and several strengths at once, and this is impossible to accept. This would necessitate some bodily parts to have knowledge while others do not, thereby, making one man, in a single moment, both aware and ignorant, which too, is impossible. The other option would be that these faculties reside within the body as singularities that simultaneously exist in all of the various body parts. This would entail that every one of these faculties exist in many different places, both in their entirety and as one consistent entity. This too is impossible. Thus, we conclude that the body is not the vessel of these faculties (and they, in turn, are neither bodily nor material).

[1] ***Translator's note***: The author lists these three attributes not as mere examples but because they are the foundational attributes necessary for a being to be classified as one capable of *cognition and intellective choice*, and *freewill and voluntary action*. Furthermore, *Knowledge*, *Strength* and *Life* are indivisible incorporeal faculties, i.e. the faculty of knowledge, the faculty of strength and life itself.

Nine: Everything that causes the growth and excellence of the soul causes the deterioration of the body; e.g. ascetic discipline, which moves the soul towards its merits but weakens the body; sleep, wherein the body is in abeyance but the pious soul witnesses the unseen world. In contrast, everything that lends strength to the body weakens the soul; for instance, eating excessively strengthens the body but depletes the soul's capability of reason; as Plato said, "Gluttony eats away wisdom."

Ten: God is a non-composite (incorporeal) singularity, and knowledge about God (like God Himself) is a non-composite singularity. Thus, the knower of this knowledge must be a singularity, whereas, a body is not a singularity. Therefore, the knower cannot be a body or something that can dwell within a body.

Chapter Two
The Soul Holds Knowledge of Particularia

The intellective soul has knowledge of "particularia," because, when one says, "This man is a human being," one is aware of both sides of the issue; the particular—the individual person being referred to—and the general; human beings as a concept. Thus, one has knowledge of both the particular and the general. If it is said, "Why is it not possible for us to conclude that the soul's knowledge of the particular is dependent upon bodily tools?" we reply, "The soul continues to comprehend even in sleep; whereas the body and its tools are in suspension therein."

Chapter Three
The Continuation of the Existence of the Soul after the Death of the Body

A soul continues to exist because it is an entity other than the body. We have already discussed that the body and its components are ever changing, while the soul is constant in its essence. Therefore, it is proven that the soul is not dependent upon the body for its existence, and neither is it reliant upon the latter for the continuation of that existence. Thus, the soul does not die, whereas the body does. We find the same argument in the irrefutable words of the Holy Qur'ān. God Almighty has said about devout individuals:

> "Never think that those who are killed in the way of God are dead. They are alive, getting succor from their Lord. (3/169)"

He also says,

> "O you tranquil soul, return to your Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing Him (89/27-8)."

About the wicked, He has said,

> "Fire, to which they are exposed morning and evening. (40/46)"

Chapter Four
The Advantages of Visiting Sacred Tombs

Some of these advantages (of visiting sacred tombs) deal with the pilgrim (i.e. the visitor), and some with the saint (i.e. the visited person) who rests within the sacred shrine. The ones applicable to the pilgrim are three:

1. Whenever a person sees a grave, he inevitably thinks of the deceased and realizes that all that remains of this individual is his virtue; whereas all his pleasures and worldly gains are no more. The pilgrim thus understands that all human beings are similar in this regard. This knowledge becomes an incentive towards a more pious life and decreases his love for the material world.

2. The pilgrim understands that people are attracted and drawn to visiting the graves of great scholars who were characterized by piety, as if they had never died. In contrast, no one visits the tombs of great kings and rulers; and with all their wealth and power, it is as if they had never lived. The pilgrim begins to understand that religiosity is the source of fame and favor even in this world, let alone the Hereafter, and that a secular and materialistic life causes one to be disgraced and forgotten even in this world, let alone the Hereafter. All this leads the pilgrim to move closer to piety and further away from worldliness.

3. One often understands humanity as being subordinate to the all-encompassing authority of the Divine, and this occurs for a host of reasons. However, this knowledge is almost simultaneously overshadowed by the apparent pomp and power of worldly kings who are seemingly beyond the reach of this authority. However, when a pilgrim witnesses a tomb, his mind is swiped clear of such confusions and he is convinced that none can escape the might of the Almighty.

The following three benefits are associated with the saint to whom the visited tomb belongs:-[1]

1. Whenever a pilgrim binds himself spiritually to a saint, and after this bonding, focuses his attention on God, the obstacles between his heart and the Divine are diminished and he is exposed, spiritually, to the magnificence of divine glory and beauty. As this happens, the pilgrim's soul reflects on some of this heavenly grace conferred upon the soul of the saint, through whom the pilgrim had achieved spiritual ascension, much like the rays of the sun, when they reflect a pool of water and, thus, fall upon a roof.

2. Spirit, when divorced of its bodily captivity, attains completion and purification. When a pilgrim's soul binds with such a sublime spirit, both act as mirrors unto one another, i.e. when one becomes the focus of divine grace, the other too, receives this illumination. The words of Allah refer to this phenomenon:

> "If he is of those of the right hand, he will receive the salutation by those of the right hand: "Peace be on you. (56/90-1)"

3. A soul separated from its body is subject to manifestations, which is impossible to access for a soul still occupied by a body. Since '*Gnostic and realized knowledge'* is better and more comprehensively attained by a spirit cleansed of its bodily preoccupations, binding with such a sublime soul makes it possible for a pilgrim's spirit to gain access to understandings otherwise beyond his reach.

[1] ***Translator's note***: These advantages are relevant to any deceased individual whose grave may be visited by a pilgrim.

As mentioned earlier, the liberated soul (freed from bodily restrains) has knowledge of *particularia*; therefore, it continues to be strongly connected to those particular pieces of its earthly existence that have remained behind in its body's grave. Whenever a living human gains connectivity to these particulars, connectivity with the liberated soul also becomes possible. Therefore, it is but natural that some of the illumination attained by this disengaged spirit would reflect on its earthly partner through this spiritual connection.

And Verily, Allah is the Guide

The End.

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī

Abu'l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (543-606 AH), well known as: *al-Khaṭīb* (the orator) *al-Rāzī*, *al-Imām Fakhr al-Rāzī*, and *Imām al-Mushakkikīn* (Leader of the Skeptics), is one of the greatest minds of the Islamic intellectual world. He studied under Muḥammad al-Baghawī, Majd al-Dīn al-Jīlī and Kamāl al-Dīn al-Samnānī, from whom he attained his knowledge of rational sciences and subsequently gained excellence in almost all the contemporary sciences of the day. He was much influenced by al-Ghazzālī and al-Juwaynī, known as *Imām al-Ḥaramayn*. In jurisprudence, he followed the Shāfiʿiyyah School, while in theology, subscribed to the Fatalist Ashʿariyyah thought.

He, through his prolific writings and compulsive skepticism, came to be known as the greatest obstacle towards the growth of philosophy in the Muslim world. Even though before al-Rāzī, al-Ghazzālī had engaged himself in a debate against philosophy by writing the book of *Tahāfut al Falsafah,* al-Rāzī, by authoring *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt,*[1] partook in this confrontation with a greater seriousness by calling into question almost all the views and beliefs of Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā). So much so that when Khawājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī wrote his own *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt,* he referred to al-Rāzī's work by saying, "Some clever people have called his work a *jarḥ* (meaning *criticism*, as opposed to *sharḥ*, meaning *commentary*)."

[1] Commentary on Avicenna's *al-Ishārāt wa'l-Tanbīhāt.*

Al-Rāzī's narrative style was new and appealing, because he strictly refrained from complicated structures and cipher like sentences. Thus, his writings became increasingly adopted as academic texts in the universities of the day. He was skilled at conveying all that he meant in an eloquent and free flowing manner, so that the reader could easily understand him. This is what caused his books to take centre stage when compared to writings of other authors. He considered simplicity to be his motto and art and this made him popular among the scholars of his time. Among other main features of his narrative technique was his ability to present content in a logical sequence and create successful correlations between various scholarly arguments.

However, we should not forget that al-Rāzī was named *Imām* (leader) of Skeptics, and seldom can one find an intellectual and philosophical discourse not looked upon by al-Rāzī with great cynicism. Doubt, if it were a step towards certainty, was a welcome condition; but, if it were a permanent place of residence, as it was for al-Rāzī in most cases, it was indeed unacceptable. He wanted, through doubt and skepticism, to take the work of his predecessor al-Ghazzālī forward and wipe out philosophy, but his works created a result opposite to his intentions, when Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī successfully answered all the questions that he had raised, inevitably strengthening Aristotelian philosophy as a subject.

Although many of his books on philosophy, written out of spite for the subject, are mangled with obstinate argumentation, oration and erroneous reasoning, some of his other books, which were written from an objective mindset, are truly well set with irrefutable reasoning. A few examples of such works are: *a-Maṭālib al-'Āliyah, al-Nafs wa'l-Rūḥ* and *Ziyārat al-Qubūr.*

A List of the Works of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī penned about two hundred books[1] pertaining to almost all academic subjects contemporary to his time, except for the science of *ḥadīth*, or oral traditions of the Holy Prophet (ṣ). Some of his works were used as formal instructive texts at universities. His views on theology are still the foundation of theological debates amongst Sunni scholars. Thus, his books remain to this day a focus of attention for Shīʿah and Sunni Muslims alike.

Some of his writings are as follows:-

1) *Muḥaṣṣil Afkār al-Mutaqaddimīn wa'l-Muta'akhkhirīn*

2) *Hikmat al-Ishrāq*

3) *Asās al-Taqwīm*

4) *Lawāmiʿ al-Bayyināt*

5) *Sharḥ al-Kulliyyāt*

6) *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa'l-Tanbīhāt*

7) *Al-Maḥṣūl*

8) *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* (also known as *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* and *Tafsīr al-Rāzī*)

9) *Al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyyah*

10) *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-Ḥikmah*

11) *Al-Mulakhkhaṣ fi'l-Ḥikmah wa'l-Manṭiq*

[1] Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah* 13:15.

12) *Lubāb al-Ishārāt*

13) *Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*

14) *Al-Nubuwwāt wa-mā Yataʿallaqu bihā*

15) *al-Barāhīn*

16) Al-Maʿālim fī Uṣūl al-Dīn

17) *Nihāyat al-ʿUqūl*

18) *Al-Nafs wa'l-Rūḥ wa-Sharḥ Qiwāhumā*

19) *Lawāmiʿ al-Bayyināt*

20) *Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm*

21) *Yawāqīt al-ʿUlūm*

22) *Kitāb Manāqib al-Shāfiʿī*

23) *Kitāb fī Ibṭāl al-Qiyās*

24) *Ziyārat al-Qubūr*

Many of al-Rāzī's books have not yet been printed and many have been lost. Dr. Muḥammad Ṣaghīr Ḥasan Maʿṣūmī says,

> "Most of al-Rāzī's books have not been printed and many have been lost. However, there is a high probability that in the various libraries of handwritten texts in Iran, Egypt and Turkey, etc., some of his works may still be found."[1]

For more information about the life of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, refer to the following texts:-

[1] *Al-Nafs wa'l-Rūḥ wa-Sharḥ Qiwāhumā*, the Introduction, pp. 5.

1) Ibn Khallakā, *Wafiyyāt al-Aʿyān*, Vol. 4, pg. 248.

2) Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi'l-Wafiyyāt*, Vol. 4, pg. 248.

3) Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah*, Vol. 13, pg. 66.

4) Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi'l-Tārīkh*, Vol. 12, pg. 288.

5) ʿUmar R. Kaḥḥālah, *Muʿjam al-Muʿallifīn*, Vol. 11, pg. 79

6) ʿAbbās al-Qummī, *al-Kunā wa'l-Alqāb*, Vol. 3, pg. 13.

7) Al-Khūnsārī, *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, Vol. 8, pg. 39.

8) Al-Zarkalī, *al-Aʿlām*, Vol. 6, pg. 313.

9) Aṣghar Dādbeh, *Fakhr Rāzī*.

10) *Al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyyah*, the Introduction.

11) *Al-Nafs wa'l-Rūḥ wa-Sharḥ Qiwāhumā*, The Introduction.

12) Al-Sabkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyyah*, Vol. 5, pg. 33.

13) Al-Dhahbī, *Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl*, Vol. 3, pg. 340.

The Treatise of Ziyārat al-Qubūr and the Veracity of its Ascription to al-Rāzī

Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī authored about two hundred books, many of which have been lost, but (by the grace of the Almighty), his most important work remained preserved and is available to us today. One such priceless work is the very concise volume of *Ziyārat al-Qubūr,* or "Visitation of Tombs," which, despite its apparent lack of textual content, is extremely rich in meaning and significance. Mr. al-Muʿtaṣim billāh al-Baghdādī in his analytical introduction to the book of *al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyyah* has named ninety-three works of al-Rāzī, the 35th of which is this treatise; however, he fails to mention the location of an available copy of it.

In the month of Shaʿbān, 1417 AH, I was finally successful in locating a copy of this work in the library of the Holy Shrine of Lady Fāṭimah al-Maʿṣūmah (ʿa) in the section dedicated to rare manuscripts under reference No. 515. This copy consisted of only six pages. However, in my entire research, I was not able to find this treatise listed in any other renowned library. Thus, with regards to the extraordinary importance of this historic work, we began efforts to translate and publish it, which, with the grace of the Almighty, has been accomplished.

About the Veracity of the Text

The manuscript of this text is devoid of a date telling us when it was written, but, by analyzing the paper, it can be said that it is at least 150 years old. After locating the current copy, the first question that came to my mind was about the

authenticity of its having been written by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. Even though the opening content on the first page clearly attributed the work to him, more satisfactory evidence was made available by reviewing the other works of this scholar.

In his book of *al-Maḥālib al-ʿĀliyah,* he says,

> "Sultan Muḥammad ibn Sām ibn Ḥusayn al-Ghawrī, a man of virtue and good character, who loved the company of scholars and pious believers, requested me to write the advantages of visiting sacred tombs for him. On his request, I took it upon myself to write an essay upon the subject, the summary of which I shall mention here..."[1]

This quotation proves the veracity of the treatise in question, because al-Rāzī clearly mentions that he wrote one such paper, and the summary of its contents, mentioned by al-Rāzī in the above quoted book, also corresponds with the contents presented in this current copy.

Apart from this, the style of the narrative and argumentative mode, related to the subject of the human soul, found in other books penned by al-Rāzī, such as *al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyyah* and *al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyah* is strikingly similar to and corresponds completely with that of the writer of this treatise. By comparing this text with two of his most important works, it becomes increasingly evident that all three are the product of a single mind. Similarly, the reasoning presented by the author in this treatise is parallel in nature to his reasoning upon the same

[1] *Al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyah* 7:275.

topic in the book *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb.* Therefore, we firmly conclude that, based on this abundant body of irrefutable evidence, no room for doubt remains with regard to the authenticity and veracity of this treatise.

The Author's Purpose of writing this Piece

It is not possible to derive the author's purpose behind writing this paper from the text of the treatise itself, however, by referring to the author's comments in his book, *al-Maṭālib al-'Āliyah,* we understand what he had sought to achieve. He says therein,

> "I wrote this piece for Sultan Muḥammad ibn Sām ibn Ḥusayn al-Ghawrī."

Sultan Ghayth al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Shihāb al-Dīn Sām al-Ghawrī belonged to the Khawārizm dynasty.

Ghawr was a state situated between Harāt and Ghaznah, and Sultan Ghayth al-Dīn Muḥammad was its ruler. When al-Rāzī traveled to Ghawr, he was warmly welcomed by the sultan who also established a *Mardrasah* (a Muslim college) for him. Al-Rāzī's legendary wealth was also a result of the high regard in which the sultan held him. The sultan was so influenced by al-Rāzī that he, upon al-Rāzī's insistence, abandoned his own Karamiyah of thought and converted to the Shāfiʿiyyah School. Al-Rāzī accompanied the sultan on many of his trips and often dedicated his writings to him. Sometimes, the sultan would ask al-Rāzī to write about a certain topic and he would do.[1]

[1] *Wafiyyāt al-Aʿyān* 3:382; *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah* 13:19, and

The book of *al-Barāhīn,* which was written in Persian, and it deals with theology, was similar to the treatise of *Ziyārat al-Qubūr* in the point that both of the books were written by al-Rāzī for the sultan, with one difference, which is that the latter was authored at the sultan's behest, while the earlier on al-Rāzī's own initiative. It is from here that we understand that the sultan was deeply interested in theological and rational discourses.

The Importance of this Text

Pilgrimage to the holy graves of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa), and similarly, to the tombs of lesser saints and pious believers in general, is one of the essential features of the Islamic doctrine, clearly referred to in the Qur'ān and the traditions of the Prophet (ṣ). This issue was in no way a peculiarity of the Shīʿah, but was indeed common to the Shīʿah and Sunni Muslims, all of whom would participate in pilgrimage to sacred sites, especially the tombs of the Holy Progeny of the Prophet (ṣ), just as pilgrimage to the sacred grave of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) remains to this date one of the most cherished and dreamed about acts of reverence for all Muslim men and women.

However, after the appearance of the Wahhābī School of thought, a vast propaganda effort was launched to discredit this act as a heresy particular to the Shīʿah Muslims, and many a simpleton (who knew little of the history behind this issue or the irrefutable arguments in its favor), fell prey to the poisonous rhetoric of the extremist Wahhābīs, thereby,

al-Fakhr al-Rāzī by Asghar Dadbay, pg. 35.

believing all such acts to be sacrilegious and essentially a Shīʿah illegal innovation in Islam. The latest of such extremist and erroneous acts of propaganda are the books authored by Dr. Qafārī. The evidence of the utter illiteracy of the writer with regard to Islamic doctrine, his complete ignorance of acceptable standards of academic research, and his relentless usage of blatant lies is littered throughout this book. At a time when Muslims are in need of unity above all other things, this author has made himself a mouthpiece of the Zionists working shamelessly for the attainment of their favor, trying to divert the anger of Muslims away from the Zionist occupiers of Palestine towards the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt's School by singling them out as the greatest threat to Islam.

These deviant Wahhābīs look incessantly towards al-Rāzī's writings for providing a foundation to their Ashʿariyyah Predestinarian beliefs, upon which their concepts of the Unity of God, Imamate (leadership of the Muslims), and even their commentaries on the Holy Qur'ān are based. Al-Rāzī, in fact, is their *Imām* (leader) and guiding light in all research matters. Thus, none of them dare question the veracity and truth of al-Rāzī's opinions and beliefs. Now we have found a book by Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī with a rational discourse upon an issue so persistently soiled upon by these very Wahhābīs; a book in which he deals with the issue logically and philosophically, and it must be said, does great justice to its academic and scholarly requirements.

It is from here that we realise that these Wahhābīs are, firstly, totally devoid of rationality and all standards of academic and logical argumentation and, secondly, not even capable of following their own school of thought, since al-

Rāzī is one of their great saviors, (having played a huge role in the revival of the Predestinarian School in the early 7th century A.H., after it had almost dwindled away), and unlike them, is clearly in favor of pilgrimages to graves. In fact, throughout the history of humankind, it is only the Wahhābīs who have made an issue of the subject. Thirdly, they are totally ignorant of firm historic evidence, let alone the very word of sacred Islamic texts, such as the traditions of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) regarding this matter.

We hope that this book will provide a step towards the illumination of true Islamic beliefs for all believers.

Pilgrimage to Sacred Tombs from the Standpoint of the Qur'ān and theAḥādīth

When the mind rationally understands a problem and rationally ascertains its undisputable necessity, no other proof is needed. However, the sacred law of Islam, derived from the Qur'ān and the Aḥādīth, has supplemented the intellectual proof at hand, with respect to this issue, with a large body of narrative evidence. Visitation and pilgrimage to holy graves stands proven from the standpoint of pure reason, as we shall elaborate later on in even greater detail, but simultaneously, we find large numbers of *Aḥādīth* explicitly declaring the desirability of such acts in Shīʿah and Sunni reference books of Prophetic traditions alike. We shall present a selection of these here.

ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, elaborating upon the verse: "*Those who prevailed said: 'We shall build a place of worship over them…*,"[1] narrates a tradition, a piece of which reads as follows:

> "The King said: It is fitting that we build a mosque here (on their graves) and undertake pilgrimage to them."[2]

From this verse and tradition, it is easily concluded that the graves of pious believers can be made into centers of pilgrimage, and moreover, mosques can be constructed there so as to worship God. As we see, all those who demanded a

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, Verse 21.

[2] *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*, 13:300.

tomb built for the *Aṣḥāb al-Kahf* (Seven Sleepers of Ephesus) were monotheists, just as ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī explains in his book of *Tafsīr* (commentary on the Holy Qur'ān).[1]

Commenting on the same Qur'ānic verse, al-Fakhr al-Rāzī writes,

> "They said that we should build a mosque over them so as to worship God, and in doing so, preserve the remains and relics therein."[2]

Al-Ṣābūnī, a famous Arab grammarian and exegete of the Holy Qur'ān,(3) has made similar statements in his own book of *tafsīr*.[4]

As for al-Qurṭubī in his book of *tafsīr*, he explains this verse in a similar manner. However, having noticed that this commentary was contrary to his beliefs, he abandoned the apparent text of the Qur'ān and brought into play a few traditions (of extremely doubtful chains of authority and purport) in opposition to the issue, and subsequently concluded that in this matter the apparent meaning of the Qur'ān must be held subordinate to the Aḥādīth quoted by him.[5] Stranger still is the fact that al-Qurṭubī himself is the one who, later on in the same text, has cited a tradition

[1] *"Tafsir Al-Mīzān* 13:285.

[2] *Tafsīr al-Kabīr* 21:105.

(3) Āghā Buzurg Tehrānī, *al-Dharī'ah* 4:278.

[4] *Ṣafwat al-Tafāsīr* 2:187.

[5] *Al-Jāmi` li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* 10:379.

reported by Abān ibn Taghlib who quoted Imam Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (ʿa) as saying,

> "Lady Fatima (ʿa), the daughter of the Holy Prophet (ṣ), visited the grave of Ḥamzah (ʿa) every Friday after she had demarcated this site with a stone."[1]

Wahbah Zuḥaylī writes,

> "The monotheists and their ruler decided to erect a mosque at the entrance of the cave where *Aṣḥāb al-Kahf* lied, so that they would pray there and seek blessings."[2]

The write unambiguously accepts that seeking benediction and blessings at the said tomb was not seen as a problem.

He then goes on to say,

> "People have a lot to gain from being close to pious believers."

Subsequently, he quotes a *ḥadīth* on the issue, supporting his words.

However, he goes on to denounce a pilgrimage to graves as contrary to the law of Islam, quoting a *ḥadīth*, which draws damnation upon all such pilgrims. The *ḥadīth* he has quoted does not bind this general damnation to times after the revelation of Islam, and thus, all those pilgrims hailed and saluted by the Qur'ān as firm and righteous believers fall victim to it. This *ḥadīth* is most clearly flawed since it openly contradicts the Qur'ān.

[1] *Al-Jāmi` li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* 10:381.

[2] *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr* 15:226.

Hereinafter, let us quote a few *Aḥādīth* from Sunni sources regarding the issue of pilgrimage to tombs:

1. A man came to the Prophet (ṣ) and complained about hardheartedness. The Prophet (ṣ) said,

> "Visit graveyards and seek guidance from the remembrance of the Hereafter."[1]

2. Whenever ʿAlī ibn Abī-Ṭālib (ʿa) came across a grave, he said,

> "Peace be upon you, O people of this dwelling place, from among the male and female believers."[2]

3. The Prophet (ṣ) used to say this prayer near graveyards:

> "Peace be upon you, O mortal souls, decayed bodies, and rooted bones; souls that exited this world as believers. O Allah, let happiness and ease from You enter upon them, and let salutations and greetings from me be granted to them."[3]

4. Imam Ali (ʿa) selected for himself the guardianship of the Baqīʿ graveyard and said,

> "I found them (the deceased) to be very good neighbors. They do me no evil and, while being among them, my thoughts are directed towards the Hereafter."[4]

[1] Al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-`Ummāl* 15:, H. 42999.

[2] *Ibid.,* 15:761, H. 42997.

[3] *Ibid.,* 15:761, H. 42995.

[4] *Ibid.,* 15:759, H. 42989.

5. The Prophet (ṣ) said,

> "I had previously asked you not to visit graves, but now my opinion has changed. You should visit them, for through this act your hearts will soften and your eyes will be led to tears, and you will remember the Hereafter. Thus, visit them and do not say words that lead people away from this act."[1]

This *ḥadīth* is particularly interesting, because the Prophet (ṣ) orders his followers to visit graves, and his tone is indicative of the obligatory nature of this act (or at least high recommendation). Secondly, it lists several advantages of such visitations. Based upon these advantages, there is little probability that such acts were prohibited by the Prophet (ṣ) in the first place.

Some traditions even quote ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb to have very often visited graveyards, where he talked with the dead[2] (even though it seems that Imam ʿAlī's words have been attributed to him).[3] Nevertheless, the purport of these *Aḥādīth* clearly proves the legitimacy of such acts.

Those who claim the prohibition of pilgrimage to the graves most often cite the following *ḥadīth* as their evidence:

> "The Prophet (ṣ) cursed the visitors of graves."[4]

[1] Al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-`Ummāl* 15:, H. 42998.

[2] *Ibid.,* 15:751, H. 42977.

[3] *Ibid.,* 15:756, H. 42983.

[4] *Ibid.,* 15:758, H. 42986.

However, these people have completely ignored three very important points in this regard:

First, the addressees in this *ḥadīth* are exclusively the women,[1] not men, and the persistence of certain people who insist on its applicability to men is frankly baffling.

Second, the directive of this *ḥadīth* is clearly cancelled out by the other one that we have quoted above, since both of these traditions have been quoted from the same source.

Third, the *ḥadīth*'s chain of authority is very questionable.

6. The Prophet (ṣ) said,

> "He who visits me after my death is as if he has visited me during my lifetime."[2]

7. The Prophet (ṣ) said,

> "He who has the means and financial capability to travel and visit my grave, but still does not do so, has done me a great wrong."[3]

8. The Prophet (ṣ) said,

> "Whoever goes on pilgrimage to my grave bearing in his mind no other intention than visiting me, Allah shall surely allow me to intercede for him on the Judgment Day."[4]

[1] Firstly, the text contains the plural feminine tense and, secondly, another *ḥadīth*, clarifying this issue, is present in the same book under reference no. 42987. Thirdly, Ibn Mājah has quoted a similar *ḥadīth* in Capter: Prohibition of Visiting Tombs for Women.

[2] Al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā' `Ulūm al-Dīn* 1:81.

[3] *ibid.*

[4] *ibid.*

Before al-Ghazzālī converted to Shīʿism, he had been considered one of the Sunni master scholars, and at that time, he authored his famous book *Iḥyā' ʿUlūm al-Dīn* (Restoration of the Religious Sciences). Therein, he writes:

> "One of the recommended rites of the Ḥajj pilgrimage is to visit the grave of the Prophet (ṣ) where one should say this prayer:

السلامُ عليك يا رسول الله،
السلامُ عليك يا نبيّ الله،
السلام عليك يا أمينَ الله،
السلام عليك يا حبيبَ الله،
السلام عليك يا صفوةَ الله،
السلامُ عليك يا خيرةَ الله،
السلامُ عليك يا أحمدُ،
السلام عليك يا محمّد،
السلام عليك يا أبا القاسم،
السلامُ عليك يا ماحي،
السلامُ عليك يا عاقب،
السلام عليك يا حاشر،
السلام عليك يا بشير،
السلام عليك يا نذير، السلام عليك يا طُهر، السلامُ عليك يا طاهرُ، السلامُ عليك يا أكرمَ ولدِ آدمَ، السلامُ عليك يا سيدَ المرسلين، السلامُ

Peace be upon you, O Allah's Apostle. Peace be upon you, O Allah's trustee. Peace be upon you, O Allah's beloved. Peace be upon you, O Allah's choice. Peace be upon you, O Allah's select. Peace be upon you, O Aḥmad. Peace be upon you, O Muḥammad. Peace be upon you, O Abu'l-Qāsim. Peace be upon you, O Obliterator (of atheism). Peace be upon you, O final (Prophet). Peace be upon you, O Resurrector. Peace be upon you, O bearer of good tidings. Peace be upon you, O warner. Peace be upon you, O source of all purity. Peace be upon you, O immaculate. Peace be upon you, O noblest of Adam's descendants. Peace be upon you, O chief of all Messengers (of God). Peace be upon you, O seal of the prophets. Peace be upon you, O Messenger of the Lord of the Worlds. Peace be upon you, O

عليك يا خاتم النبيّين، السلامُ عليك يا رسولَ ربّ العالمين، السلامُ عليك يا قائدَ الخيرِ، السلامُ عليك يا فاتح البرّ، السلامُ عليك يا نبيّ الرحمةِ، السلامُ عليك يا هاديَ الأُمّة، السلامُ عليك يا قائدَ الغرِّ المحجّلين، السلامُ عليك وعلى أهل بيتك الذين أذهب الله عنهم الرجسَ وطهّرهم تطهيراً، السلامُ عليك وعلى أصحابك الطيبين وعلى أزواجك الطاهرات أُمّهات المؤمنين، جزاك الله عنّا أفضل ما جزى نبيّاً عن قومه ورسولاً عن امّته، وصلّى عليك كلّما ذكرك الذاكرون، وكلّما غفل عنك الغافلون، وصلّى عليك في الأوّلين والآخرين، أفضل وأكمل وأعلى وأجلّ وأطيب وأطهر ما صلّى على أحد من خلقه، كما استنقذنا بك من

leader to every prosperity. Peace be upon you, O commencer of every virtue. Peace be upon you, O Prophet of mercy. Peace be upon you, O guide of the community. Peace be upon you, O leader of the marked and white-forehead ones. Peace be upon you and upon the members of your household, from whom Allah has removed impurity and whom He has purified thoroughly. Peace be upon you, upon your pristine companions and upon your pure wives, the mothers of the believers. May Allah reward you on behalf of us with the best reward He has ever granted to a prophet on behalf of his people and to an apostle on behalf of his community. May Allah bless you whenever you are mentioned by those who mention you and whenever your mention is forgotten by the inadvertent. May Allah bless you among the bygone and the coming nations with the best, most perfect, highest, loftiest, finest, and purest blessings He has ever conferred upon any of His creatures, because He has saved us from straying off through you, opened our eyes against blindness

الضلالةِ، وبصّرنا بك من العماية، وهدانا بك من الجهالة، أشهد أن لا إله إلاّ الله وحده لا شريك له، وأشهد أنّك عبده و رسوله، وأمينه وصفيّه، وخيرته من خلقه، وأشهد أنّك قد بلّغت الرسالة، وأدّيت الأمانة، ونصحت الأُمّة، وجاهدت عدوّك، وهديت أُمّتك، وعبدت ربّك حتى أتاك اليقين، فصلّى الله عليك وعلى أهل بيتك الطيبين وسلم وشرّف وكرم وعظم.

through you, and guided us against ignorance through you. I bear witness that there is no god save Allah; one and only and having no partner with Him (in Godhead). And I bear witness that you are verily His servant, apostle, trustee, choice, and best of His creatures. And I bear witness that You did convey the message, fulfill the trust, act sincerely towards the community, strive against your enemy, guide your people, and serve your Lord until that which is certain (i.e. death) came upon you. So, may Allah send blessings, benedictions, honor, nobility, and grandeur upon you and the members of your household, the immaculate.

One should then add the following:

اللهم إنّك قد قلت وقولك الحقّ: ﴿ولو أنّهم إذ ظلموا أنفسهم جاءُوك فاستغفروا الله واستغفر لهم الرسولُ لوجدوا الله توّاباً رحيماً﴾. اللهم إنّا قد سمعنا قولك، وأطعنا

O Allah, You have said—and Your words are the very truth—: "And had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah, and the Messenger had also asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Oft-returning to mercy, Merciful." O Allah, we have surely listened to Your wording, obeyed Your order, and came

أمرك، وقصدنا نبيّك، متشفعين به إليك في ذنوبنا، وما أثقل ظهورنا من أوزارنا، تائبين من زللنا، معترفين بخطايانا وتقصيرنا، فتب اللهم علينا، وشفّع نبيك هذا فينا، وارفعنا بمنزلته عندك وحقّه عليك، اللهم اغفر للمهاجرين والأنصار، واغفر لنا ولإخواننا الذين سبقونا بالإيمان، اللهم لا تجعلْهُ آخِرَ العهدِ من قبر نبيّك ومن حرمك يا أرحم الراحمين.

to Your Prophet, beseeching his intercession for us with regard to (the forgiveness of) our sins and the loads of evildoings that have overburdened our backs, declaring our penitence from our flaws, and confessing of our wrongdoings and shortcomings. So, O Allah, please accept our repentance, admit the intercession of Your Prophet for us, and raise up our ranks with You in the name of his (Your Prophet) rank with You and Your duty towards him. O Allah, please forgive the *muhājirūn* (emigrants) and the *anṣār* (supporters); and forgive us and our brethren-in-faith who had precedence of us in faith. O Allah, (please) do not make this time of pilgrimage to be the last of my pilgrimages to (the tomb of) Your Prophet and to Your sanctuary, O Most Merciful of all those who show mercy.

He continues,

> "Upon accomplishment, it is recommended for the pilgrim to visit the Baqīʿ Graveyard every day where there are the graves of ʿUthmān, al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī and Jaʿfar ibn

Muḥammad (peace be upon them)."[1]

These are the words of Imām Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī, one of the most eminent Sunni master scholars. By analyzing the recommended prayers quoted by al-Ghazzālī and comparing them with the prayers said by the Shīʿah when they visit the holy shrines, one can hardly see any difference with regard to the subject matter. Thus, one understands that in his time no real difference of opinion on this topic existed between Muslims.

[1] Al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā' `Ulūm al-Dīn* 1:82-4.

The Religious Law Regarding the Visitation of Tombs

Abū-Dawūd, the compiler of one of the six most reliable Sunni reference books of *ḥadīth* (known as *al-Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah*), has narrated in his book of *al-Sunan* two Prophetic traditions concerning the issue of visiting the tombs. Both of these traditions clearly express the legitimacy of this act and even the high recommendation of it.[1] This matter is further reinforced by the fact that the book does not comprise even one tradition proving the opposite.

Al-Bukhārī, too, has quoted only those traditions which openly favor such pilgrimages. In the chapter named "Visitation of Tombs," he refrains from issuing a clear edict on the issue,[2] but the absence of any *ḥadīth* holding a contrary edict is proof of his inclinations with regards to this issue.

Muslim al-Nayshābūrī, too, narrates only Prophetic traditions in ratification of such acts.[3] Al-Nawawī, in his commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, quotes a few of these traditions and then goes on to say,

> "Similar traditions are found in almost all major collections of Prophetic traditions, such as that of Abu'l-ʿAlā' ibn Māhān al-Maghribī. Abū-Dāwūd, al-Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah, being trustworthy authorities, have also narrated similar texts, thus we conclude that these traditions are authentic and their veracity is beyond question."

Then, after quoting another *ḥadīth*, he goes on to say,

> "With this tradition of the Holy Prophet (ṣ), it becomes clear that the prohibition of men visiting tombs was repealed, in fact a consensus exists among scholars about the legality of such acts for men, even though its legality for women is disputed. Some believe it to be prohibited and others consider it to be discouraged, while others still hold it to be permitted."[1]

As for Ibn Ḥazm, he decided visiting the tombs to be highly recommended and that, at times, it can even be considered obligatory. He sees no difference between sexes in the issue and views it as permissible for both men and women. After quoting a few authentic *aḥādīth*, he comments,

> "It was ʿUmar alone who forbade people from visiting tombs although this report in itself is doubtful."[2]

Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī also permits this kind of pilgrimage making no difference in its legitimacy between men and women. He even goes on to say that there is no difference whether the deceased is Muslim or non-Muslim.[3]

[1] *Sunan Abī-Dāwūd* 2:72.

[2] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 2:548, Ref. no. 1199.

[3] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 7:45.

[1] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 7:45.

[2] *Al-Muḥallā* 3:388, Edict: 600.

[3] *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 3:115.

Having discussed the obligatory nature of respecting the dead and declared that the dead can hear the footsteps of the living walking over their graves, Ibn Qudāmah—a master jurisprudent of the Ḥanbaliyyah sect—goes on to say,

> "There exists no difference of opinion among people of religious knowledge regarding the legitimacy of visiting graves."

He then mentions Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's edict about the recommendatory nature of these actions.

Ibn Qudāmah continues to say that when confronting a grave, one should pray for the departed Muslims in this manner:

> "Peace be upon you, O people of this dwelling from among Muslims and true Believers."

He also says that reciting Sūrah Yāsīn (Chapter 36 of the Holy Qur'ān) and invoking God's forgiveness upon the departed Muslims in general and one's parents in particular is highly recommended when their graves are visited.[1]

Furthermore, in a chapter on the ritual Ḥajj pilgrimage, he continues,

> "Visiting the Prophet's tomb is highly recommended. Abū-Hurayrah narrates that the Prophet (ṣ) said: 'Whenever a person comes to visit my grave and greets me, Allah causes my soul to return to me so that I will answer the pilgrim's greetings and salutations.'

[1] *Al-Mughnī* 2:424.

> Similarly, al-ʿAtbī narrates that a Bedouin came to the Prophet's tomb and besought his intercession for forgiveness of his sins. Al-ʿAtbī subsequently saw the Holy Messenger (ṣ) in his dream asking him to tell the Bedouin that his sins had been forgiven."

Ibn Qudāmah thus concludes that one should say the following prayer upon visiting the Holy Prophet's tomb:

السلام عليك أيّها النبـيّ ورحمـــة الله وبركاتـــه، السلام عليك يا نبـيّ الله وخيرته مِن خلقه، أشـهدُ أن لا إله إلاّ الله وحـده لا شـريك لـه، وأشـهد أنّ محمّداً عبـده و رسـولهُ، أشـهد أنّـك قـد بلّغـت رسالات ربـك، ونـصحت لأُمّتك، ودعوت إلى سبيل ربّك بالحكمة والموعظـة الحسنة، وعبدتَ الله حتى اتاك اليقـينُ، فـصلّى الله عليك كثيـراً كمـا يحـبّ ربّنا ويرضى، اللهـم اجـزِ عنّا نبيّنا أفضل ما جزيـت أحـــداً مـــن النبيـــين والمرسلين، وابعثه المقام

Peace and Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you, O Prophet. Peace be upon you, O Allah's Prophet and the best of His creatures. I bear witness that there is no god save Allah; one and only and having no partner with Him (in Godhead). And I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and apostle. I bear witness that you did convey the messages of your Lord, act sincerely towards your community, call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and serve Allah until that which is certain (i.e. death) came upon you. May Allah bless you immeasurably as much as our Lord likes and much as He is pleased. O Allah, please reward our Prophet on behalf of us with the best reward You have ever conferred upon any of the Prophets and Apostles, and endue him with the praiseworthy standing that You have promised to give, so that all the bygone and the

المحمـود الـذى وعدتـه يغبطـه بـه الاولـون والآخرون، اللهم صلّ على محمّد وعلـى آل محمّـد، كما صلّيت على ابـراهيم وآل ابراهيم انّـك حميـد مجيد، وبارك على محمّد وعلـى آل محمّـد كمـا باركت على ابـراهيم وآل ابراهيم إنّك حميدٌ مجيدٌ، اللهم إنّك قلـت وقولـك الحق:﴿ولو أنّهم إذ ظلمـوا أنفسهم جاؤك فاستغفروا الله واستغفر لهم الرسـول لوجدوا الله توّاباً رحيمـاً.﴾ وقد أتيتُك مستغفراً مـن ذنوبى، مستشفعاً بك إلى ربّي، فأسـألك يـاربّ أن توجب لـي المغفـرة كمـا أوجبتهـا لمـن أتـاه فـي حياته، اللهـم اجعلـه أوّل الـشافعين، وأنجـح السائلين، وأكرم الآخرين

coming generations will wish to have. O Allah, please confer benedictions upon Muḥammad and the household of Muḥammad jus as You conferred benedictions upon Abraham and the household of Abraham; and send blessings upon Muḥammad and the household of Muḥammad just as You send blessings upon Abraham and the household of Abraham. You are verily worthy of all praise and full of all glory. O Allah, You have said—and Your words are the very truth—: "And had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah, and the Messenger had also asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Oft-returning to mercy, Merciful." I have come to you, (O Apostle of Allah) beseeching God's forgiveness of my sins and asking you to intercede for me with my God. So, O Allah, I beseech You to fulfill your promise and forgive my sins as same as You did to those who came to him (i.e. the Prophet) during his lifetime. O Allah, please make him (the Prophet) to be the first to intercede, the most successful whenever he asks for something, and the noblest of the bygone and the coming generations.

والأوّلـين، برحمتـك يـا أرحم الراحمين.

(Please do that) in the name of Your mercy, O Most Merciful of all those who show mercy.

He then goes on to say,

> "Rubbing one's hands on and kissing the walls of the shrine is not recommended."[1]

Accordingly, Ibn Qudāmah does not decide such acts as prohibited; rather, he denies them to be recommended. That is why the Ḥanbaliyyah School considers these actions legal.

From the texts quoted thus far, we can see that the issue of the legality of visiting graves is one upon which the famous scholars are unanimous in their opinion. It is only the Wahhābīs who differ in this matter and, in doing so, stand in complete opposition not only to a clear scholarly consensus but also to their own school of jurisprudence.

All schools of Islamic jurisprudence consider pilgrimage to the graves of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) as legal and highly recommended.[2]

For further details, the gentle reader is advised to refer to the following books:-

1) ʿAllāmah al-Amīnī, *Encyclopedia of al-Ghadīr.*[3]

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[1] *Al-Mughnī* 3:589-591.

[2] References to this fact can be seen in Sunni reference books of *ḥadīth* as well as Zaydiyyah and Shī`ah books.

[3] `Allāmah Amīnī in volume 5 of his book discusses the issue in detail. Ayatollah Subhani discusses Ibn Taymiyah's opinions in

2) Al-Shahristānī, *al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal*.

Hereinafter, we shall introduce a book written by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad, the grandson of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. Known by the name of *Jamāl al-Dīn*, he was an outstanding scholar of the 8th century A.H. and an expert in Qur'ānic commentary (*tafsīr*), medical sciences, gnosis and linguistics. People knew him by the title of *al-Aqsarā'ī* or *al-Āksarā'ī*, derived from *Aqsarā,* a district of Istanbul, meaning: white palace.[1] He was contemporary to the Ottoman Caliph, Murād I.

In a book entitled *Forty ḥadīth*, he attempts to explain the inner and Gnostic meanings of the *aḥādīth*, and comments on the issue of visiting tombs, by saying:

> "The best pilgrimage for men is to visit their parent's graves. The souls of the dead wait at these graves for one to come and visit them, pray for them and invoke God's forgiveness upon them, for this is one way in which these souls can be helped."

The manuscript of this book is preserved in the library of the Turkish Ministry of Religious Affairs.[2]

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this matter and provides a most interesting critique of his ideas in *Buḥūth fi'l-Milal wa'l-Niḥal*, vol. 4. Also, in his book entitled, *Ibn Taymiyah ḥayātuhū wa ʿaqā'iduhū wamawāqifuhū min al-Shīʿah wa-Ahl al-Bayt*, Ṣā'ib ʿabd al-Ḥamīd provides a very enlightening discourse on Ibn Taymiyah's views.

[1] Al-Zarkalī, *al-A'lām* 7:41.

[2] *Diyanet Isleri Baskanligl Kutuphanesi Erelyazmasl Eserlr Katalogu*, 1166.

Visitation of Tombs from the Viewpoint of Philosophers

To further understand al-Rāzī's philosophical discourse on the topic of visiting the tombs, we shall refer to the views of other famous philosophers with regard to this issue.

Aristotle

Linguistically, the word *Aristotle* means, "a complete and learned man."[1] Aristotle confirmed his place in history by laying the foundations of Logic and Aristotelian Philosophy. When he died, the people of his city collected his bones in a pot and buried them. That place subsequently became a place of gathering where people would meet to seek the sages' guidance and help in all sorts of problems. Students who sought to understand difficult scholastic and academic matters would hold discussion sessions at Aristotle's gravesite. When their intellectual problems would be solved, they would attribute this to the tomb of the great sage.[2]

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī has twice referred to such pilgrimages in his book of *al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyah* wherein he says that various students would visit the deceased teacher's grave and, thereby, their various scholastic and academic problems would be solved.[3]

[1] *Tārīkh al-Ḥukamā'*, pg. 186.

[2] *Tārīkh al-Ḥukamā'*, pg. 190.

[3] *Al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyah* 7:131 and 228.

Avicenna

The Chief Shaykh (*al-shaykh al-ra'īs*) Ibn Sīnā believes that the soul of the pilgrim is bound to his body, whereas the soul of a deceased saint is no longer in any such captivity. Therefore, the soul of the latter is free to influence other things directly without the need of any material connection between them. As a consequence, whenever a pilgrim visits a holy gravesite, the soul of the saint buried within that hallowed ground is able to directly influence him, showering down numerous benefits upon his soul and cleansing it from many evils. Shaykh further explains that the relationship between a pilgrim and a saint can be compared to that of a body and a soul, the pilgrim being a body and the saint the influential soul acting upon it. The more the body is ready for receiving the soul, the more the soul able to manifest itself upon the earlier. It is because of this phenomenon that people are more inclined to accept correct doctrinal teachings at sacred sites than other places. As for other spiritual advantages of pilgrimage, such as remembrance of the Hereafter and comprehension of the superficial nature of the material world, they are too numerous and their importance is too great for us to compare with material rewards linked to the same.[1]

Avicenna thus says,

> "The purpose behind praying and visiting the tombs is that the visiting souls, which are inseparably connected to the bodies derive from the visited souls an item of prosperity or repel an item of harm and

[1] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Rasā'il* 1:338.

damage. In both cases, the result affiliates with self-readiness and derivation the requirements from these images. Hence, because these visited souls bear a resemblance to and border on the intellects; they must exercise great influence upon the intellects of the visitors and provide the visitors with perfect power that differs according to the disparity of the visitors' physical and spiritual conditions.

An example of the influence of the visited souls on the visitors' physical powers is the bodily temper. So, if the bodily temper is in a moderate state of nature innate character, the visited soul will then affect the brain cavities, since brain is the speaking machine of the soul. Once such an influence is made, the visitor's soul will be in the best mood of readiness and reception, especially when the intrinsic power and honor are added to it. Moreover, in such places where the bodies of the living visitors and those whose graves are visited meet, mentalities become clearer, ideas sharper, and souls readier than ever, just as the case at visiting the House of God. It is unanimously agreed that the House of God is the very place where everybody is drawn nearer to the Divine Being and soared towards God. Besides, such pilgrimages comprise wonderful reasons for redemption from the lower punishment prior to the supreme one.

Examples of the spiritual influences of the visited souls on the visitors' mentalities are abandoning the transient pleasures of this world, obviating the concerns and obstacles (that preclude from the truth), devoting one's thinking to the sacredness of the

> grandeur of God, and furnishing oneself with the light of God privately so as to dispose of grief that is always connected to the speaking soul. May Allah guide you and me to releasing our souls from the blemishes of this transitory world. Verily, Allah is All-powerful and well-aware of what He wills to do."

In addition, a further discourse on this topic can be found in Chapters 16 and 17 of Vol. 9 of Avicenna's *al-Ishārāt wa'l-Tanbīhāt*. Therein, he explains that a pilgrim can transform his inmost consciousness into a proverbial mirror that reflects the inner consciousness of the saint's soul and therefore loses all awareness of its own existence. In this state the pilgrim experiences the epitome of spiritual ecstasy.[1]

Shiekh Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī

Elaborating on the characteristics of those engaged in spiritual wayfaring, al-Suhrawardī says in his book *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq,*

> "They knock persistently on the doors of light, with patience and complete purity of intent, until the angels welcome them in with divine gifts... they are those who have themselves profited from divine illumination and, simultaneously, are vessels for the delivery of this grace to others."[2]

[1] *Al-Ishārāt wa'l-Tanbīhāt* 3:386.

[2] *Majmua Musanifaat Sheikh Ishraq* 2:246.

Muḥammad Sharīf Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Harwī, in his translation and exegesis of this passage from the works of Shaykh Ishrāq, says:

> "The souls of the perfected ones, those who have successfully ascended a sublime cognitive state, are able to shower down this illumination upon the souls of the imperfect ones below them. It is from here that we understand why a spiritual sage is vital, not only in his life but also after death."[1]

In this passage, he considers seeking intercession of the souls of great saints as vital, both in their physical lives and after their departure from the material world.

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī

Among all philosophers, al-Rāzī has propounded on this topic most eloquently and rationally. Even though most of his arguments have roots in the works of Avicenna and al-Suhrawardī, his clear and astute manner of presenting them is still praiseworthy. In explaining the importance of pilgrimage to sacred tombs, he starts by presenting three introductory premises:

Premise 1: A soul does not perish with the death of the body.

Premise 2: A soul departed and divorced of material existence is, in one way, stronger that a soul bound to a body. Its strength lies in the fact that it acquires all knowledge without any restrictions or limitations. However, a soul bound to a body is also stronger, in one sense, than a

[1] *Anwariyae*, pg. 232.

soul freed of physical captivity. Its strength lies in its ability to grow and evolve and acquire new knowledge.

Premise 3: The connection of the soul and the body is sublime (something similar to love) and, therefore, is not immediately severed by the mere detachment of a soul from a body.

He then adds:

> "When a pilgrim visits a gravesite, his soul finds union with the ground of that tomb (he and the tomb are one, for both exist in the same time and space). Simultaneously, the soul of the departed is also in union with that particular piece of earth. When these two unions confront each other, they lead to a third union between the two souls in question. These two souls become like mirrors onto one another, reflecting upon each other everything they hold in terms of illumination and knowledge. It is from this aspect that pilgrimage is beneficial not only for the pilgrim but also for the departed saint."

Al-Rāzī, in presenting traditional proofs regarding the separate and distinct natures of the body and the soul, says:

> "**Third Argument**: It has been a common practice that rational people betake themselves to the blessed shrines where they offer prayers, observe fasting, and beseech God for some important affairs; so, they obtain traces of benefits observably and see outcomes of acceptance evidently. It is reported that whenever the disciples of Aristotle failed to solve a problem because of its difficulty, they would head for his grave and study the problem there, and they would always

find the solution. The same thing is frequently taking place at the graves of the master scholars and great ascetics in the present day. This means that the souls are remaining there after the death of the bodies; otherwise, our seeking help from the dead who is free of any sense or feeling would have been meaningless and void.

Supporting this fact is that the living ones pray for the dead and give alms on behalf of them. It very frequently happens that when a living person sleeps near the grave of a dead one, he sees the dead in dream. It also happens frequently that the dead person, in dream, guides the living one to a certain issue and to a treasure of which the living person has been inadvertent. It is also possible that the dead person attracts the attention of the living one to an important affair. Of course, all such matters are indicatives of the fact that souls continue to exist after the death of the body, which means that a soul is different from a body."

In another place of the book, he says,

"I was confronted by a philosophical problem which greatly troubled me. Then I saw my father in a dream and he solved my problem for me."

He continues,

"I heard that when Firdawsī, the famous poet, finished writing his famous book *Shāh-nāmah* for Sultan Maḥmūd ibn Sibkatkīn, he was deeply depressed because the sultan did not give the poet his due that fitted the value of his book. In dream, Firdawsī saw

Rostam, an ancient hero, who said to him, "You have praised me very much in your book, but I cannot give you your due because I am now among the dead. Yet, you may go to *so-and-so* place and dig there. You will find a treasure. Take it for yourself." After this incident, Firdawsī used to day, "Although he is dead, Rostam is more generous than Maḥmūd the living.

I also heard that whenever the disciples of Aristotle were too confused to find the solution of a problem, they would go near his grave and study it. Then, the problem would be solved."[1]

Imām Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī

We have already quoted some of al-Ghazzālī's discourses on the topic of visiting the tombs from his book entitled *Iḥyā' ʿUlūm al-Dīn."*

Other than that, in his book of *al-Adab fī'l-Dīn,* within the etiquettes of entering the holy city of al-Madīnah, he says:

"One of the etiquettes of visiting the sacred last resting place of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) is that the pilgrims approach the burial chamber with respect, offer salutations and then talk to the Prophet (ṣ) as if he sees them in front of him. Similarly, while departing from that blessed place, they should avoid turning their backs to the grave."[2]

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[1] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyah min al-ʿilm al-Ilāhī* 7:228.

[2] *Al-Adab fī'l-Dīn*, pg. 172.

Shaykh Sayyid Ḥaydar al-Āmulī

Sayyid Ḥaydar al-Āmulī confirms that all of the divine laws are based upon three elements, namely; time, space, and brethren-in-faith. He thus says,

> "As affirmatively proven, such congregational devotional acts like the congregational prayers, the Friday Prayer, the ritual Ḥajj pilgrimage, the ceremonial feasts, and the visitations paid to the graves of the Prophets, the Apostles, and the Imams (peace be upon them)—all these acts have not been decreed except for having these three elements drawn together in them. A congregational prayer, for instance, comprises these three elements, because the place where this prayer is performed is a special place that is ascribed to God the Almighty. Time is the very juncture without which a prayer cannot be performed. The brethren-in-faith are the Muslims who gather at that place for performing that devotional act. So, when these three elements gather in one place, their supplications and their acts of obedience to God must be accepted. The same is applicable to the other congregational acts, such as the ritual Ḥajj pilgrimage, the feast days, the visitations to the graves of the saints, and the other collective devotional acts."[1]

[1] Sayyid Ḥaydar al-Āmulī, *Jāmiʿ al-Asrār wa-Manbaʿ al-Anwār*, pg. 284-5.

Mīr-Dāmād

Mīr-Dāmād believes that the intellective soul is connected to the body in two ways. First, by way of the material body itself and, second, by way of the substantive form (*al-ṣūrah al-jawhariyyah*) of this body. At death, he says, the link of the soul to the body via the substantive form of the latter breaks down. However, the other link, the one between the soul and the material body itself, continues to exist. The spirit can, therefore, attain blessings and benefits even after the apparent death of the individual through this unbroken connection. The soul of a visitor of a grave works as a brilliant mirror reflecting illumination onto the departed spirit, during the visitation of the earlier to the burial site of the latter:

> As to the issue of tomb visitations, stopping at the shrines of the righteous personalities, obtaining (spirituality) from their cerebral spirits and incandescent souls, and seeking illumination from the intellectual luminosities that are available at their holy shrines, this issue is in fact ramified from another foundation. This foundation holds that the root of the speaking soul in its essence is the center of the world of intellect, the homeland of its quintessence is the land the Divine kingdom.
>
> The soul obtains authority over the material body through the mutual relationship of the two from two ways: One is by way of the personal materiality that is kept existent, through the existence of its personality, as long as the heavens and the earth endure. The other is by way of the substantive form of the body that is transitory and mortal.

When death falls, the mutual relationship between the body and the soul becomes null, with regard to the form of the body; while the essence of the soul, which continues to exist in the turnovers of the forms that happen to it, is ceaseless. This very ever-existing relationship between the body and the soul is most probably saved so that the soul will be returned to its very body at the somatic resurrection when Allah the Almighty permits.

In conclusion, this ever-existing relationship is the reason for deriving spiritual emanation and receiving divine prosperity when tombs and shrines of saints are visited.

Furthermore, innumerable benefits can be attained by the meeting of the visitors whose souls are lit by the divine luminosities and the mystical beams, just like the refined mirrors that reflect the rays of light and multiply the brightness of lights that fall on them so immensely that the weak and bleary eyes cannot see them.

The *ʿallāmah* (well-versed scholar) and *imām* (leader) of the Skeptics says in his book *al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyah*...[1]

The author thus quotes al-Fakhr al-Rāzī's comments on the topic. These comments have been cited earlier.

[1] *Al-Qabasāt*, pg. 455-6.

Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn

Mullā Ṣadrā, also known as Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, is rightfully considered the greatest philosopher to have ever lived in the Islamic World. He caused many critical changes in the views on various issues through his boldly original initiatives. One such pivotal new idea was his view about the unity between the subject (the thinker) and the predicate (the thought of). It was during a pilgrimage to the holy tomb of Lady Fāṭimah al-Maʿṣūmah (ʿa) in the city of Qom, on Friday the 7th of Jumādā II, in the year 1037 (solar hegira), that this idea struck him. In the marginal notes of his book *Asfār*, he says:

"When I was determined to give the final touches to this book, I was in Kahak, a village near the city of Qom. So, I came to the city for the purpose of visiting the tomb of the daughter of Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar, peace be upon both of them, and deriving from her. It was Friday when this idea was brought to light for me at that very place by the aid of Allah the Almighty."[1]

Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī

Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn, in his *The Soul's Journey,* Chapter Three, Section One, says,

"When the spirit relinquishes the body, the latter either becomes powerless and empty or the departing soul leaves behind a 'form' within the body, which causes it to retain some dimension of its prior existence."[2]

[1] *Durūs Ittiḥād al-ʿāqil bi'l-maʿqūl*, pg. 108.

[2] ***Translator's note***: The author intends to say that such an event (i.e. death of the physical body) can only lead to one of these two

Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, in his commentary on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Asfār*, says:

> "It is indeed true that the soul leaves behind such a 'form' in the body it departs from, and it is none other than this element that forms the basis of all pilgrimages to sacred graves."[1]

Indications of the veracity of what these two philosophers have said can be obviously seen with various holy saints, whose dead bodies have remained preserved for centuries after their deaths. Such phenomena are reported to have happened to the bodies of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (*aṣḥāb al-kahf*), al-Ḥurr ibn Yazīd al-Riyāḥī,[2] Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, ʿAllāmah al-Majlisī and many others.

Imām Khomeini (r)

In his commentary on al-Qayṣarī's famous book of *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikmah*, Imām Khomeini explains:

> "My teacher, the perfect Gnostic sage Shāh'ābādī, has commented,
>
> 'It can be said that even after death, the connection of the soul with its body remains unbroken, because the body was the vessel of the soul's growth. Therefore, it is possible to give new life to a dead body even in this world. The story of ʿ*Uzayr* (Ezra) that is related in the Holy Qur'ān is an example of this possibility. However, it can be claimed that restoration to life in reality refers to the ideal body.'
>
> The Imām continues: "What he (Shāh'ābādī) has said reflects what the late Mīr-Dāmād mentions in the Persian essay ascribed to him, and in reality the secret behind such pilgrimages to tombs is concealed within this very idea. As far as I recall, Mīr-Dāmād says that two connections exist between the soul and the body. One is the outward and formal connection,[1] and the other the material connection. The first is severed upon the death of the individual, while the latter remains intact. The second persistent connection is the reason why visitation of graves is part of the Islamic code."[2]

Even though we could not locate the "Persian essay" referred to by Imām Khomeini, the text he quoted is in complete conformity to what we have earlier quoted from Mīr-Dāmād's *al-Qabasāt.* Imām Khomeini expresses his agreement with Mīr-Dāmād's argument and presents no criticism upon it; therefore, we can see that he too understands this issue in a similar manner.

logical possibilities.

[1] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikmah al-Mutaʿāliyah*, known as *al-Asfār al-Arbaʿah* 8:49.

[2] Al-Ḥurr ibn Yazīd al-Riyāḥī was one of the famous personalities who had a major role in the tragedy of Karbalā' and was then martyred in defense of Imam al-Ḥusayn (ʿa).

[1] The purpose of the author seems to be the connection, which leads to the animation of a body.

[2] *Taʿlīqāt ʿalā Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikmah*, pg. 175.

Other than the instances cited so far, arguments in support of visitation of graves can be found innumerably in books written by Gnostic scholars. For example, Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, a master philosopher, deems obligatory to undertake a pilgrimage for visiting the Holy Prophet's tomb. Moreover, he even regards a Muslim's faith as deficient unless that Muslim completes his faith by carrying out this duty.[1]

On another page of the book, Ibn ʿArabī quotes a couplet that reads,

> Had it not been for visiting the Holy Prophet's tomb,
> you—the people of al-Madīnah—would have been just
> like the others.

This couplet is said to have been composed by a man from the city of Holy Makkah, named ʿĪsā ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Salʿabūs in reply to a poem composed by a man from the city of al-Madīnah, asking the governor of Makkah to move in to their city, because it is more preferred to that of Makkah, as he claims. Hence, the two poets composed two poems, making a comparison between the two cities…[(2)]

[1] *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* 11:230, Chapter 72.

[(2)] Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* 1:760.

Explanatory Notes upon the Treatise "Visitation of Tombs"

Explanatory Notes upon Chapter One

"Chapter One: Ten Definitive Arguments Proving the Existence of the Intellective Soul"

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī entitles this chapter, *Distinctive Arguments Proving the Existence of the Intellective Soul*.

It is true that one may assume that the author seeks to achieve only this single objective in this chapter, but after studying the arguments presented therein, all of which deal with the incorporeal nature of the soul, it becomes apparent that the author has in fact aimed at achieving two simultaneous objectives:

1. Establishing the existence of the soul,

2. Proving its incorporeal nature.

Since these two issues are not so interconnected that proving one would automatically prove the other, al-Rāzī has chosen only those arguments which would serve both objectives at the same time.

It is helpful to mention that various terminologies have been used by authors while referring to the soul, some of which we shall present here. Usually in books dealing with Ethics and Philosophy, the soul is referred to as *nafs* (self) and sometimes as *rūḥ* (soul), with reference to its role in the

animation of a physical body.[1] In other instances it has been called *'aql* (intellect) because it comprehends the intelligible, even though it is argued that this comprehension is a faculty of the *nafs* and not the *nafs* itself.

Similarly, some authors prefer the term *qalb* (heart—lit. transformation), because it experiences change and transforms from one state to another. However, it must be understood that these terms are sometimes used for other concepts.

It was obviously necessary for al-Rāzī to define the "Intellective Soul" before he could go on to prove its existence. Khawājah Naṣīr, in his commentary on Avicenna's *al-Ishārāt wa'l-Tanbīhāt*, defines this concept thus:

> "*Nafs* is the primary perfection of the natural body; the body is a vessel and tool for the former in the realization of its actions, and is itself the holder of potential life (i.e. *nafs* is the reason behind the life of the body)."[2]

Al-Rāzī, in *al-Nafs wa'l-Rūḥ*[3] and *al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyyah*,[4] presents a definition of the soul that is very similar to the one put forward by Khawājah Naṣīr.

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[1] ***Translator's note***: Given that a physical body, be it human or otherwise, is lifeless without a soul. Thus, it is the *Rūḥ* that forms the critical difference between a living body and a dead one.

[2] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa'l-Tanbīhāt*, 2:290.

[3] *Al-Nafs wa'l-Rūḥ wa-Sharḥ Qiwāhumā*, pg. 27.

[4] *Al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyyah*, 2:231-237 (especially interesting are the footnotes upon these pages).

As for the late al-Narāqī, he defines the soul as thus:

> "*Nafs* is a spiritual (metaphysical) entity that takes the body into its service for the completion of its own actions. It is the reality and the essence of an individual's being, and all the parts and organs of his body are but vessels and tools subordinate to this very reality."[1]

In short, *nafs* is what we refer to as *myself/I* and *life*. However, an exact definition of this entity is very difficult to come up with (as is true for almost all metaphysical concepts).

Another point to remember here is that the author has referred to the soul as *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah* (Intellective Soul). The adjective *intellective* is used for the soul in two instances; one is as an explanatory restrictive condition, and the other is as an exclusionary restrictive condition.

In books related to the science of ethics, the term Intellective soul is used as opposed to the terms *al-nafs al-ghaḍabiyyah* (the irascible soul) and *al-nafs al-shahawiyyah* (the appetitive soul) with the purpose of separating the first's rational nature from the other two's carnal nature. This use thus displays an example of the exclusionary restrictive condition. Similarly, in texts dealing with the same science, the word *nafs* is used interchangeably for various states of the soul. For example, it is said that man has three souls, or *nufūs*; the *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah* (the sublime peaceful soul), the *al-nafs al-lawwāmah* (the self-censuring soul) and

[1] *Jāmi` al-Sa'ādāt* 1:27.

the *al-nafs al-ammārah* (the impulsively appetitive soul); whereas these three are separate states of the soul and not three separate souls in themselves.

When using the expression *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah* (the intellective soul), al-Rāzī proposes the logical and philosophical meaning of the term, and does not refer to the various usages of the same in the science of Ethics. Even though he, too, might have used the condition *nāṭiqh* (intellective) as an exclusionary restriction so as to distinguish the soul in question from the *al-nafs al-fakalī* (heavenly soul), *al-nafs al-nabātī* (vegetative soul) and *al-nafs al-ḥayawānī* (animal soul), his writing clearly shows that he had no intention of referring to any of these other variants and meanings of the term whatsoever, (therefore, we can conclude that in the present text, the adjective *nāṭiqah* or Intellective, used by al-Rāzī, is in fact an explanatory restrictive condition only elaborating the definitional and pivotal characteristics of the *nafs* in question).

Another important point to note is that even though al-Rāzī has presented, in the current document, only ten arguments in support of the given proposition, this does not mean that arguments pertaining to this discourse are limited only to this number. Al-Rāzī himself, in other books authored by him, has put forward additional proofs regarding this subject.

In our study, we found that the total number of arguments about the existence of an incorporeal soul, presented by various scholars, exceeds one hundred, especially when we look at the cumulative number of such proofs brought forward by authors of theological, philosophical and ethical texts. Other than the intellectual arguments regarding this subject, we also have transmitted evidence in the form of

Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic traditions (as well as other genres of proof), all of which, when summed up, form a staggeringly huge number.

Al-Rāzī, however, in this treatise, has restricted himself to intellectual arguments regarding the existence of the soul, but while dealing with the immortality of the soul after the demise of the material body, he does allow himself the leverage to use transmitted proofs from the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*. It is worth mentioning that the second set of arguments serve the first purpose in an equally effective manner. The reason al-Rāzī has restricted himself thus is that he began his work on the foundation of brevity and, therefore, never intended his work to be an all-inclusive thesis. His purpose was merely to write a short philosophical exegesis of the issue, which he has done rather well.

To understand the colossal magnitude of this issue; i.e. the existence and incorporeal nature of the soul, it is enough to know that Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn (Mullā Ṣadra) has regarded the negation and denial of these two as the root cause of all evils, sins, transgressions and deviations.[1]

> "One: Every individual, from the viewpoint of his identity, is a constant entity. However, the opposite is true for all the components of his body. This is because the body is spawned by the union of semen and blood, and these two are both hot and liquid in nature. Wherever and whenever heat and liquid come together, a portion of the compound that they form is lost through evaporation. It is because of this continuous loss that the body requires food so as to compensate for the gradual, but constant, depletion of itself. Therefore, the body and its components do not remain in existence indefinitely, but in fact change continuously. It is from this major and minor premise that we conclude: "An individual, from the viewpoint of his identity, is other than his body."

[1] Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, pg. 604.

The first argument that al-Rāzī brings forth to prove the existence of the soul is within the framework of the second premise of the syllogism. It is as follows:

- Every individual, from the viewpoint of his identity, is a constant entity.
- None of the bodily parts and components is constant entities.
- Therefore, every individual, from the viewpoint of his identity, is other than his body.

It would, however, have been better if al-Rāzī had framed the conclusion thus: Every individual, from the viewpoint of his identity, is other than his bodily parts and components.

This would have rendered the conclusion as an exclusionary-affirmative proposition, which is the correct form for all conclusions derived from arguments framed as the second premise of the syllogism.

Al-Rāzī's own conclusion, however, is in the form of an inclusionary argument with a negative predicate. Secondly, al-Rāzī has not used the subject of the major premise as a predicate in his conclusion. This too is an error in the formulation of such arguments from the viewpoint of the science of Logic.

Establishment of the truth of the minor premise

It cab be argued that the constant nature of man's identity is something axiomatic and, thus, requires no proof. Al-Rāzī, too, was from such a school of thought and, therefore, we see him presenting no evidence for the veracity of the minor premise. He simply states the argument and moves on to discuss proofs regarding the major premise. We, too, believe the issue to be self-evident, but if someone were to insist that we bring forth proof for this premise, it would not be a complex task. Every individual who looks upon his past knows that he is still the same person as he was, therefore, from the viewpoint of his identity he is a constant entity with no change in himself.

Establishment of the truth of the major premise

The human body is a product of the marriage of semen with blood, and both are characteristically liquid and hot. Whenever heat meets liquid, it causes a section of that liquid to turn to vapor, thereby diminishing it. Thus, the human body is constantly diminishing and requires sustenance to replace the lost matter within itself. Here we see that the parts and components of the body are not constant entities. Another example is when we see a man who was previously fat turn thin or vice-versa. This too is indicative of the inconsistent nature of the body and its parts. We can therefore conclude that because an individual is a constant entity and a body is an inconsistent ever-changing thing, the individual cannot be equated with his body and is categorically other than it.[1]

[1] For further details on this argument refer to *Al-Nafs wa'l-Rūḥ wa-Sharḥ Qiwāhumā*, pg. 37; *al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyyah* 2:239; *Sarḥ al-`Uyūn*, pg. 198; *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* 9:91; *al-Maṭālib al-`Āliyah* 7:101.

> "Two: Sometimes, man loses awareness of all bodies around him, even his own, but remains aware of his own existence. Thus, that which he is aware of is definitely different from that which he does not have awareness of."

Proof regarding this argument lies in the fact that we often find ourselves detached from, oblivious to and unaware of all material objects, even our own material bodies. When this happens, its extent is such that we find ourselves devoid of even the slightest attention towards our bodily parts. An example of such a situation is when we find ourselves speaking of or contemplating about something that is very important to us. In such similar situations, not even a miniscule amount of our attention is focused on our own body and its various segments and parts, but even in that very moment we cannot claim that we have lost awareness of our own beings. Here we see that even if we become unaware of our material bodies, we remain constantly aware of our own selves. Since that which a man is aware of cannot, at any given time and place, be equal to or the same as that which he is oblivious of (due to an inherent contradictory opposition between the two situations), we must conclude that an individual's *self* must be other than his/her physical body.[1]

[1] *Al-Nafs wa'l-Rūḥ wa-Sharḥ Qiwāhumā*, pg. 40; *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* 9:91; *al-Maṭālib al-`Āliyah* 7:105.

Secondly, the real basis of al-Rāzī's explanation is the empirical argument of Avicenna about an individual who, suddenly and without any prelude, comes into existence from nonexistence in midair. Such an individual will have no awareness or knowledge of anything at all, but at the same time will be aware of his own self.[1]

> "Three: The faculty of thought (the intellective soul) matures and reaches the full blossoming of its potential at the age of forty. However, the body begins to decline at the same age. Therefore, we conclude that the faculty of thought and reason is not bodily in nature."

The faculties and strengths of the body are opposed to those of the soul. For instance, at old age, the body becomes weak, whereas comprehension and wisdom (which are faculties of the soul) mature, becoming stronger than before. Similarly, in youth, the body is at its strongest, but wisdom and understanding remain immature and weak. Therefore, we see that if the *nafs* were material in nature, it would be subordinate to the body (i.e. it would be just another organ of the individual's physical form), and in being so, its strength and weakness would correspond with the rest of the body.[2]

Here, a question may be raised: If the author's proposition about the inverse relationship between the body and the soul is correct, why do we sometimes witness cases where the

[1] *Al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyyah* 2:238.

[2] *Jāmi` al-Sa`ādāt* 1:7; Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, pg. 526.

increase in an individual's age brings about gradual decrease in his cognitive strength as well as his physical capabilities?

The answer to this query lies in the difference between those faculties and activities of the soul which are dependent upon the body, and those which are independent of it. For further understanding of this concept, please refer to more detailed texts.[1]

> "Four: Studying and pondering causes heat and constipation which pollutes the body. However, the same leads to the accumulation of knowledge and, by consequence, growth of the intellective soul. So, the soul is other than the body."

In this argument, al-Rāzī proposes that a certain thing cannot be beneficial and detrimental at the same time, space and circumstance. Thought and cognitive processes inherently stress the brain, leading to its erosion and deterioration. This in turn weakens and damages the body. However, the same processes lead to the perfection and evolution of the soul, as, through them, the potential of the soul is realized and it grows intellectually. Since any assumption which equates the soul to the body will necessarily equate these two opposing phenomenon, we must conclude that the soul of an individual is other than his body.[2]

> "Five: The soul is able to imagine vast mountains and rivers, and, by doing so, calls these images into its

[1] *Al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyyah* 2:378.

[2] *Al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyyah* 2:381; *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* 9:92; *al-Maṭālib al-`Āliyah* 7:119.

> presence. These huge images most certainly need a place to materialize in, but the body is incapable of this feat, for, how can a larger body be accommodated within a smaller one? Thus, the soul must be something other than the body."

This argument is normally used in philosophical texts for the purpose of proving the existence of "conceptual/mental" entities and, as far as we know, only al-Rāzī brought it into use with the intention of establishing the existence of the intellective soul.

The argument is thus: The human soul can conceptualize and imagine huge mountains and oceans (i.e. it can visualize objects much larger than the human physical form), and when such things are imagined and visualized, they require a certain space wherein they can exist. Simultaneously, the human mind does not minimize or restrict the natural perimeters of these images, but visualizes them in the same huge dimensions that their counterparts are in the phenomenal world. Since any given object cannot be contained by an object smaller than it, we must conclude that these images (conceptual entities) exist in a space other than the human body.

> "Six: Wherever the body accepts a form, it is incapable of accepting another form simultaneously, but the soul can acknowledge multiple forms at the same time. Therefore, the soul cannot be material."

This argument is explained thus: A body cannot accept two or more forms simultaneously. For it to acquire a new form, the previous form must seize to exist. For instance, a body that has a triangular form cannot be a square at the same

time, except that it ceases to continue as a triangle and transforms into a square. This is in reality a characteristic of all material things.

However, the human mind (intellective soul) accepts and acquires many forms, both conceptual and physical, and, while doing this, none of the prior forms are displaced or destroyed. In fact, every new form that it accepts increases its capacity and capability to accept even more new forms. That is why through diligent study and persistent practice, individuals are able to learn at an increasingly accelerating pace and expanding capacity. Therefore, we understand that the human intellective soul is not material.

Ibn Miskawayh, in his book on Ethics, explains this argument very well,[1] and the late al-Narāqī follows his lead.[2]

It seems useful to mention that the third, fourth, fifth and sixth arguments that al-Rāzī presents can be summed up into one single argument. What al-Rāzī has said was that, firstly, the body cannot accept multiple forms simultaneously, whereas the soul can; secondly, the body cannot be a container for conceptual entities (or images) larger than itself, but the soul can give space to entities and images of any dimension; thirdly, thought and cognition expand the horizons of the soul but diminish the body; fourthly, an individual's body starts its recession after the age of forty but the intellective soul continues its ascent towards perfection even beyond this age; subsequently, some people

[1] *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, pg. 29.

[2] *Jāmi` al-Sa`ādāt* 1:5.

may be bodily very weak but they are extraordinarily strong in character and spirit, whereas other people are physically very strong but they have very limited spiritual strength.

Similarly, eating and drinking excessively erode the cognitive faculties of the soul, whereas fasting (in the sense of abstinence from food) increases and develops these very faculties; and finally, sleep is a state wherein the body loses many of its fundamental abilities but, in this same state of physical incapacity, the soul's independence and scope of influence increases.

With a little attention, we can observe that these arguments can be summarized in one short statement. The soul's needs and reactions are completely opposite to the body's needs and reactions in all given circumstances; therefore, the body must be separate from the soul. Thus, we conclude that the soul is an incorporeal entity and its existence is not material.[1]

> "Seven: All human beings attribute their various bodily parts to themselves, e.g. people say, 'My brain,' 'My heart,' 'My body...' It is only logical to conclude that the 'attributed' is other than the 'attributed to;' therefore, the soul must be other than the body."

This is one of the most popular arguments used for establishing the existence of an intellective soul. Its explanation is as follows: All human beings attribute their various bodily parts to "*themselves;*" e.g. they say, "I used

[1] *Al-Nafs wa'l-Rūḥ wa-Sharḥ Qiwāhumā*, pg. 40; *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* 9:92.

my hand," "I used *my* feet," "I spoke with *my* tongue," "*my* thoughts," "*my* brain," "*my* heart" and so on. In reality, human beings see all these things as extensions of their real *'selves.'* Thus, we understand that there exists in us, the humans, something which binds all our numerous parts together into one unified existence, without which these parts would be isolated singularities with no relation to one another. Since we know that none of our physical bodily parts is capable of such an action; i.e. capable of being equated with our *self* or total identity, we must conclude that this *self*—which is referred to by the words *my*, *I*, and so forth—is something other than our material existence.

The Chief Shaykh Avicenna mentions this argument in his essay, *Ma'rifat al-Nafs* (Understanding the Soul). Ayatollah Ḥasanzādah Āmulī has quoted the said essay in his book, *Sarḥ al-'Uyūn* in its totality.

> "Eight: If the body was the vessel of *knowledge*, *strength* and *life* (i.e. these attributes were bodily in nature and thus, in one way or the other, material in essence), it would be necessary that all parts of the body had their own knowledge, strength and life. If this were true, one man would not be one man but would be several men with several lives, several sets of knowledge and several strengths at once, and this is impossible to accept. Another situation would necessitate that some bodily parts have knowledge while others do not, thereby one man would be, in a single moment, both aware and ignorant, which too, is impossible. The other option is that we take these faculties to be residing within the body as singularities that simultaneously exist in the various body parts.

> This would entail that every one of these faculties existed at many different places, in their entirety, and at the same time, each being only one consistent entity. This too is impossible. Thus we conclude that the body is not the vessel of these faculties (and they, in turn, are neither bodily nor material)."

In this argument, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī says that knowledge, life and strength are characteristics that need a vessel to exist, i.e. it is impossible for these characteristics to exist independently. As the body and bodily parts cannot be such a vessel and we know for sure that these characteristics exist, there must exist for them a non-material (incorporeal) vessel.

He thus presents proofs of the inability of the body to assume the role of a vessel for the said characteristics. He says that if we assume that the body is a vessel for these traits, we are presented with two possibilities; one, every single part and organ (in fact every single cell) of the body is simultaneously a vessel for an individual's knowledge, strength and life; or, two, some parts and organs of the body are vessels for these traits while other organs and parts are devoid of these characteristics.

Since both possibilities under the aforesaid assumption are in fact logical impossibilities, we must conclude that the body is fundamentally incapable of performing such a task.

He then goes on to explain why he sees the two mentioned conditions as logical impossibilities. As for the first case, (every part of the body is simultaneously a vessel of an individual's strength, knowledge and life), he argues that if this possibility were to be true, it would mean that every single organ of an individual's body has its own particular

strength, knowledge and life. This would invariably lead us to conclude that every individual has in himself several (in fact, infinitely many) instances of each of these traits; i.e. every individual has several lives and so forth. We know that every individual has only one of each of these attributes and that is why we sometimes describe an individual as *a scholar*, *a living being* or *a strong person,* but if the given case were true, we would have to describe every individual as many. For example, we would call a person *scholars, living beings* and so on. From here, the impossibility of any such assumption becomes excessively clear.

Similarly, if we imagine that a single trait is contained and accommodated simultaneously by several different body parts, this hypothesis will also be wrong, because a single characteristic can only reside in a single place at one time (not to mention that if someone argues that a single trait was divided up between different parts, this will be impossible, for traits are non-composite realities that cannot be divided into pieces).

In dismissing the second condition, he argues that the said assumption (life, strength and knowledge are contained by some body parts while other segments of it are devoid of these traits) unavoidably leads to a paradox. What he means is that, by taking the second condition as true, we will be faced by a situation wherein we must consider a single individual both *knowledgeable* and *unknowledgeable* simultaneously (and similarly *strong* and *weak,* and *alive* and *dead* all at the same time). This, as can be appreciated from the above discourse, is not logically possible. Therefore, we understand that the vessel containing these traits is other than an individual's body and its parts (the material existence of an individual).

> Nine: Everything that causes growth and excellence of the soul causes deterioration of the body. For instance, ascetic discipline moves the soul towards its merits, but it weakens the body. Likewise, in sleep, the body is in abeyance but the pious soul becomes witness onto the unseen world. In contrast, everything that lends strength to the body weakens the soul. For instance, eating excessively strengthens the body but depletes the soul's capability of reason, just as Plato said, 'Gluttony eats away wisdom.'

This argument is rooted in the sixth argument presented by al-Rāzī and, as we mentioned earlier, the third, fourth, fifth and sixth arguments can be summed up in one argument. However, holding this argument as an independent one is not problematic either.

> "...for example, ascetic discipline moves the soul towards its merits but weakens the body..."

The Arabic word *riyāḍah* literally means exercise, but here the author takes it to mean ascetic discipline aimed at the purification of the soul. According to *al-Rā'id*, and Arabic-Arabic dictionary, the word *riyāḍah* is explained as thus:

> *Riyāḍah*; exercise, abstinence, cleansing oneself of undesirable traits and replacing them with good merits, introversive worship, ascetic self-discipline through abstaining from one's wants and desires (in the terminology of the *Sufis*).[1]

[1] *Al-Rā'id* Dictionary 1:890.

> ...just as Plato said, 'Gluttony eats away wisdom.'

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī quotes this statement from Aristotle, but we could not locate its source. However, Imam ʿAlī ibn Abī-Ṭālib, the Commander of the Faithful, is reported to have said,

> "Astuteness and gluttony can never be combined."[1]

> "With gluttony, astuteness cannot exist."[2]

> "Gluttony does away with astuteness."[3]

> "Gluttony veils astuteness."[4]

The late Khonsari, in his exegesis of the third of these *Aḥādīth*, says: "Gluttony is an obstacle to the intellect, because when the stomach is full, the body becomes heavy (inclined towards sloth) and the mind is overtaken by vapors and gases (drowsiness). In such a state, deep thought and deliberation are no longer possible.[5]

> Ten: God is a non-composite (incorporeal) singularity, and knowledge about God (like God Himself) is a non-composite singularity; therefore, the knower of this knowledge must be a singularity, whereas a body is not a singularity. As a result, the knower cannot be a body or something that can infuse or dwell within a body.

[1] *Sharh e Gharer wa Derer Aamdy* 6:pg. 370, *ḥadīth* no. 10572.

[2] *Ibid.,* 6:361, *ḥadīth* no. 10528.

[3] *Ibid.,* 1:94, *ḥadīth* no. 345.

[4] *Ibid.,* 1:172, *ḥadīth* no. 652.

[5] *Ibid*., 1:94.

We did not find this argument in books other than those penned by al-Rāzī himself, even though in his exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān, he attributes it to other scholars.[1]

This argument is framed within the second premise of the syllogism.

* The knower of "knowledge about God" is a singularity,
* A body is not a singularity,
* Therefore, a body cannot be the knower of "knowledge about God."

If we replace the major premise with the statement:

* Nothing "dwelling" within the body is a singularity,

The conclusion will be:

* The knower of "knowledge about God" cannot be anything dwelling within the body.

The accuracy of this argument depends on two preambles. Proving the major premise is very easy, since it is self-evident. The body is a combination and summation of its parts; therefore, it cannot be a singularity, for a singularity is not divisible. The same is true for anything or any entity which dwells or can dwell within the body (for anything dwelling within a divisible entity must also be divisible, or to put it in another way, anything dwelling within another entity is a fraction of the latter and thus a division of it. These characteristics are not possible in a singularity).

[1] *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* 4:166.

As for proving the minor premise, al-Rāzī has failed to present a strong case for it. He seemingly wants to establish its veracity through the interrelationship between the intellect (subject), the intelligible (predicate) and the intelligence. He argues that God is a non-composite singularity—a fact being very clear for us. On the other hand, God is a "known" for human beings. Since, there exists a definite unity between every "known," its "knower" and the knowledge in question, the "knower" of God cannot be other than a non-composite singularity.

We, however, consider this argument to be wrong. In fact, when properly analyzed, it becomes evident that such an argument necessitates definite impossibility. Firstly, God is not "known" for human beings, i.e. knowledge about God is not acquired, for any such proposition necessitates a kind of encompassment of God by the human intellect,[1] whereas an unlimited being cannot be encompassed and contained by a limited one. We do have presentient knowledge *('ilm ḥuḍūrī)* about God; but this knowledge is concerned with His existence exclusively, not with His quiddity.

Secondly, the unity proposed by al-Rāzī between the intellect/knower and the intelligible/known is an existential and intrinsic unity, but not extrinsic, whereas we know that even though an existential-intrinsic unity exists between an individual and the mental image he has of a "known" entity, no such relationship exists between him and the phenomenal existence of that entity in the real world. In fact, no sane

[1] "*And they cannot encompass Him through their knowledge…*" The Holy Qur'ān 20:110.

person holds such a unity to be true, (for it means that the reader of this book and the book he holds—and knows about—are in fact one existence, and this is impossible).

It is true that every concept or mental image that an individual has about God is in an intrinsic unity with the individual himself, but we must appreciate:

Firstly, this image is not correct (i.e. it is not equal to, nor correctly represents phenomenal reality).

Secondly, the unity that exists is between the individual and a creation of his own intellect or imagination.

Thirdly, any such belief parallels the heretical beliefs of the *Ḥulūliyyah* Sufis (Infusionist).

We can however attempt to justify al-Rāzī's statement as follows:

Supposing that he meant to say that God is entirely a non-composite singularity and, at the same time, is the predicate to human presentient knowledge, the presentient knowledge about Him must also be a singularity, (because a mutual correlation exists between a "known" thing and the "knowledge" pertaining to it). So, keeping this in mind, it becomes clear that the "knower" of such "knowledge" must also be a singularity (because, as we mentioned earlier, there exists an intrinsic unity between the "knower" and his "knowledge"). Since the human body is in no way a singularity, it cannot be the "knower" of the said "knowledge;" therefore, the "knower" in this case is categorically other than an individual's physical entity.[1]

[1] ***Translator's note***: To understand this line of argument fully, the reader must refer to more detailed texts about the explanation of what *Presentient Knowledge* is and how it differs from *Acquired Knowledge*.

Explanatory Notes upon Chapter Two

"The Soul Holds Knowledge of Particularia"

In Chapter One of this treatise, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī has proved the separation between the body and the soul through ten evidential arguments through which he has proven not only the existence of the soul but also its being necessarily incorporeal. The connection between this chapter and the visitation of tombs is very clear, because the advantages of such pilgrimages rest upon the establishment of these fundamental ideas. In Chapter Two, we will discuss whether the soul has knowledge of *particularia* and attempt to prove so. Proving the existence of this characteristic for the soul is vital, because in Chapter Four the author will attempt to explain the connection the soul has with its body, and later on, with the earth inside its body's gravesite.

> "The intellective soul has knowledge of 'particularia' because, when one says, 'This man is a human being,' one is aware of both sides of the issue, the particular (man) and the general (human beings). Thus one has knowledge of both the particular and the general."

Al-Rāzī has only presented one argument in favor of this idea. He holds that for a person to form an assertion and then attribute a judgment to it, it is necessary for him to be able to completely conceptualize in his mind the subject and

predicate in question, because judging an absolute unknown is impossible. Similarly, assertion via the affirmation of one thing upon another is not possible without a mental concept of the two sides of the said affirmation. Therefore, human beings must possess a certain faculty to conceptualize subjects and predicates.

Sometimes, we may say such statements like, 'Red apples are sweet,' i.e. we use statements where both the subject and the predicate are sensible objects,(1) but one is related to the sense of sight while the other to our sense of taste. Therefore, there must exist in humans a faculty that enables them to apprehend the five physical senses simultaneously. We already know that senses can only apprehend *particularia* by themselves, but they are unable to understand *generalities*. Thus, to conclude our point, humans must have a faculty to which all physical senses are subordinate and work as its tools.

At other times, we say such statements like, 'This person is a human' or 'John is human,' i.e. we construct statements where the subject is *particular* but the predicate is *general*. Therefore, we must say that humans must invariably have a faculty that can conceptualize not only physical and sensible things but also apprehend and imagine such contemplative things (that do not have a physical existence) as generalities.

> "It may be said: Why is it not possible for us to conclude that the soul's knowledge of the particular is dependent upon bodily tools..."

(1) i.e. objects that can be sensed through the five physical senses.

Here, al-Rāzī presents an objection that might be raised against his argument regarding the soul's ability to comprehend the particular. Those who oppose his views in this matter argue that if one of the human organs related to sense perception were to undergo an accident, that particular organ and the perceptional mechanism related to it would become void and useless. For instance, when one's eyes are hurt in an accident, one loses his sight as a result, and if his brain were to be injured, he would lose a part of his cognitive power. However, if all the bodily sense organs continue working properly, his soul will also continue comprehending. Therefore, those who oppose al-Rāzī's idea conclude that the soul's comprehension of particulars is dependent on the body's sense organs and thus the soul in itself does not have knowledge of particulars. They insist that the knowledge of particulars is related to these bodily organs exclusively; external organs like the eyes or internal ones like the brain. Al-Rāzī has also quoted this argument, among others, in his book of *al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyyah*.[1]

> ...we would thus answer: The soul continues to comprehend even in sleep, whereas the body and its tools are in suspension therein.

In reply to the abovementioned objection, al-Rāzī restricts himself to a rebuttal. He says that during sleep, when all bodily senses are in abeyance, the soul continues its thought processes and it is even able to sense colors and tastes. From here, he concludes that the human soul is able to comprehend particulars by itself and is not dependent upon

[1] *Al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyyah* 2:351.

the bodily sense organs for this task. A more fundamental answer to the said objection is that the soul uses the bodily sense organs as its tools for the achievement of its own purposes. If one of these tools is de-capacitated, the soul will not be able to continue using it, causing a disruption in the activities it performs via that particular tool. However, when the soul, in all of its functionalities, is not related to these physical organs (or even related to the comprehension of particulars like taste and color), it becomes independent and self-sufficient. Hence, the objection that knowledge of particulars is wholly dependent upon sense organs is flawed and baseless in its origin.

Explanatory Notes upon Chapter Three

The Continuation of the Existence of the Soul after the Death of the Body:

> A soul continues to exist because it is an entity other than the body. We have already discussed that the body, and its components, are ever changing while the soul is constant in its essence. Therefore, it is proven that the soul is not dependent upon the body in its existence, nor is it reliant upon the latter for the continuation of its existence. Thus, the soul does not die, whereas the body does.

This issue has been discussed in many places under different titles. The titles given to this discussion are: “The Problem of the Immortality of the Soul,” “The Question of the Persistent Existence of the Soul after the Death of the Body,” and “Continuation of the Soul beyond the Demise of the Body.”

However, these different titles all pertain to one subject matter. Al-Rāzī believes that this problem can be solved, based upon the already proven foundation of the incorporeal nature of the soul, thus in no need for any new arguments. He argues that dispersion is an exclusive property of composite material entities; therefore, anything that is not composite and material will neither experience decay nor will it be subject to dispersion. As has been already discussed, the soul and the body are different from one another. The body is continuously changing while the soul is constant in its essence. Similarly, the soul is not dependent on the body in its existence; therefore, there is no reason for

it to cease existing when the physical body dies. In conclusion, although the soul is a created being (or contingent accident) and is not pre-eternal, it is still everlasting and beyond the possibility of destruction, because it has an incorporeal nature. This conclusion is not in need of any further evidence.

> "We can find the same argument in the irrefutable words of the Holy Qur'ān."

Al-Rāzī believes that the most important evidence of his argument is the irrefutable words of the divinely inspired sources (i.e. the Holy Qur'ān and the words of the Holy Prophet and Saints). He also believed that intellectual and philosophical arguments to this effect are mere subsidiary and secondary proofs.[1] This is why he uses narrated/canonical proofs very extensively in almost all of his texts.

> "...God Almighty has said about devout individuals: 'Never think that those who are killed in the way of God are dead. They are alive, getting succor from their Lord,'"[2]

This Qur'ānic verse is related to the martyrs of the Battles of Badr and Uḥud. It apparently entails that those who were killed in these battles are alive, even though their bodies are no longer animated. Al-Rāzī, in his exegesis, accepts this interpretation and, after mentioning that these martyrs continue to live on, presents two theories regarding the fundamentally different natures of the soul and the body.

[1] Footnotes to *Al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyyah* 2:412.

[2] Sūrah Āl-ʿimrān, Verse 169.

The first of these is that the soul permeates the body like fire permeating a burning ember, rose water permeating a rose, or oil permeating a sesame seed.

The second is that the soul is an entity independent of the body and is in no way corporeal or material.

Whatever the case maybe, the soul separates from the body when the latter dies. So, the soul continues its own existence. This explains the issue of reward and retribution in the grave. He then goes on to cite more Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic traditions.[1]

In the book of *al-Nafs wa'l-Rūḥ,* al-Rāzī says,

> The Holy Qur'ān stands witness over the fact that we, humans, stay alive after the death of our physical bodies.

Quoting the same aforementioned verse, he comments,

> It is clear that the body ceases to exist after its death, but Qur'ānic verses tell us that we, humans, continue to live on regardless. Thus, it becomes apparent to us that the human being is other than his body or his bodily parts.[2]

Elsewhere in the book, al-Rāzī cites Verse no. 154 of Sūrah al-Baqarah (No. 2) and explains it, using the same previous argument.[3]

[1] *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* 9:91.

[2] *Al-Nafs wal-Rūḥ wa-Sharḥ Qiwāhumā*, pg. 43.

[3] *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* 4:165.

> In some other place, it (i.e. the Holy Qur'ān) reads: "O you tranquil soul, return to your Lord well-pleased and well-pleasing Him."[1]

This verse pertains to individuals who have recognized God and, through remembrance and prayer, have reached the state of tranquility. Many Qur'ānic exegetes have provided this verse to propose that human souls are pre-eternal and they had already existed before the creation of their physical bodies.[2]

However, supposing that this verse deals with a time pre-dating the appointment of humans on earth, and the words: "*Return to your Lord...*" deal with the return of the souls to this world and to the human bodily form, the only possible conclusion that can be derived from this understanding of the verse is that souls pre-date physical bodies, and not that souls are pre-eternal.

On the other hand, if we interpret this verse according to Prophetic traditions, we will have to relate it to a time after the separation of the soul from the body, which occurs when the body dies. The same verse then shows that God commands the departed soul to return to Him. Another possibility is that the Arabic word *rabb* mentioned in the verse actually means the body; therefore, the given verse is related to the return of the soul to its body on the Day of Judgment.

[1] Sūrah al-Fajr, Verses 27-28.

[2] For example, al-Bayḍāwī, in *Anwār al-Tanzīl* 2:559, and al-Rāzī, in *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* 31:178.

In any case, the conclusion that souls continue existing after the demise of the physical form stands proven.

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, in his exegesis, has discussed the issue of the soul's incorporeality and has, for this purpose, presented two arguments which are the same as the first two ones presented by him in Chapter One of the treatise. He says that the human soul is in reality the very entity that an individual refers to when he says, "I" and this entity is a non-bodily (unphysical/immaterial) essence which does not perish when the body perishes.[1]

He goes on to say,

> This verse shows that the soul does not die, but returns to the Heavenly Realm after the body's demise.[2]
>
> ...As for the wicked, He has said, "Fire, to which they are exposed morning and evening."[3]

This verse is related to the family (or nation) of Pharaoh. It testifies to the accuracy of the issue of the grave retribution. The verse then reads,

> The day the Hour is proclaimed (it will be said,) Admit the people of Pharaoh to the severest punishment.

This passage of the verse pertains to the punishment on the Day of Judgment. Since the grave punishment stands proven

[1] *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* 31:177.

[2] *Al-Nafs wal-Rūḥ wa-Sharḥ Qiwāhumā*, pg. 44.

[3] Sūrah Ghāfir, Verse 46.

for the family of Pharaoh, it must be proven for all people.[1]

In the book of *al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyah,* a much larger body of evidence (derived from the Prophetic traditions) is incorporated so as to clarify this issue.[2]

[1] *Al-Nafs wal-Rūḥ wa-Sharḥ Qiwāhumā*, pg. 43; *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* 27:72; *al-Arbaʿūn Ḥadīthan* by Shaykh Bahā'ī, pg. 348, *ḥadīth* 39.

[2] *Al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyah* 7:129.

Explanatory Notes upon Chapter Four

The Advantages of Visiting Sacred Tombs:

> Some of these advantages deal with the pilgrim and some others are associated with the saint who rests in that sacred site. Those applicable to the pilgrim are three...

In this chapter, al-Rāzī mentions the advantages of visiting tombs. The first three advantages can in fact be considered a prologue meant to build a firm foundation for the contents of this chapter. Herein, he mentions three advantages gained by a pilgrim who visits a gravesite, and three advantages gained by the departed soul whose gravesite is visited by that pilgrim.

> 1. Whenever a person sees a grave, he inevitably thinks of the deceased and recognizes that what remains of this individual is nothing but his virtue, whereas all his pleasures and worldly gains are no more. The pilgrim thus understands that all humans will face the same fate. This knowledge creates an incentive towards leading a more pious life and decreases his love for the material world.

The first of many benefits, which such a pilgrimage yields for a pilgrim, is a moral one. Love of the material world is the foundation of all evils and sins. Keeping this in mind, we see that such visitations have a profound effect in eroding human inclinations towards temporal temptations, while simultaneously refocus an individual's attention upon the Hereafter. These two factors react to motivate one towards limiting his connections with material wants and freeing himself from the bondage of temporal entrapments.

There is no doubt that remembrance of death leads to ascetic piety and to a greater attention to matters of the Hereafter. Any individual, who is constantly in remembrance of death and its inevitability, will regard the struggles and challenge of this temporary world as very feeble and unimportant. This is because, firstly, he understands that these troubles are only temporary and, secondly, he comprehends that death itself (and that which is to come after it) is a challenge much greater than anything existing in this limited world. Thus, remembrance of death arouses the heart, moistens the eyes with tears, and kills the negative appetites that exist in us.

When a pilgrim visits a grave with sobriety and in a state of contemplation, detaching himself from all preoccupations, he will see that the wealthy and their wealth have all become mere dust. The rich did not benefit by their riches and all their treasures could not save them from the claws of death. All their worldly efforts and gains were of no use to them and in no way depleted the magnitude and severity of that which awaits all human beings in the grave and beyond.

Let us not forget that the only thing that accompanies us, from amongst the items of this world, is a simple burial shroud. Based on this, we must understand that the world is not worthy enough for us to focus all our efforts and potentials towards acquiring it. Warrān ibn Abī-Firās, a great sage and an experienced ethicist, says,

> Funerals and graves are the best of places (to gain insight into reality), but only if the observer imagines himself as being inside the two.[1]

[1] *Tanbīh al-Khawāṭir* 1:283.

One day, ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, a ruler of the Umayyad dynasty, passed by a graveyard. Once his eyes fell on the graves, he began to weep profusely. He then said, "These are the graves of our fathers and mothers, all of whom were slaves to their temptations in this world, and now they accompany the earth."

His tears kept shedding heavily until he lost control and fainted. Having regained his consciousness, he said, "By God! There exists no one as fortunate as the one who has saved himself from divine retribution in the grave and the Hereafter. Truly, the only shroud that does not decay (and leave its host naked and bankrupt) is the fabric of good deeds and piety."[1]

The late Shaykh ʿAbbās al-Qummī has written in some detail about the importance of learning lessons from visiting graveyards.[2]

Al-Ghazzālī reports the following:

> It was said to ʿAlī (ʿa), 'Why have you become a companion of graves?' He responded, 'I found them (the graves) to be the best of neighbors and the finest of companions; they never commit slander and they always invite men towards the remembrance of the Hereafter.'

Al-Ghazzālī goes on to say,

> Rabīʿ ibn Khathīm had dug up a grave inside his house and whenever he felt negligence and pollution building up within his heart, he would lie inside this pit and

[1] *Ibid*., 2:238.

[2] Shaykh `Abbās al-Qummī, *Manāzil al-Ākhirah*, pg. 21.

> recite this Qur'ānic verse: 'O Lord, send me back again that I may do some good that I did not do (in the world)'.[1] He would repeat this verse several times and then answer himself thus, 'Rabī', you shall now return to the world; so, do some good deeds.'[2]

In any rate, the real purpose behind visiting graves must be admonition that is gained from the state of those buried in the graves.

Al-Ghazzālī says,

> Pilgrimage to graves is in general recommended for the purpose of remembrance and admonition; and pilgrimage to the tombs of saints is recommended so as to gain spiritual benefits, exclusive to such sacred places, along with admonition.[3]

Fayḍ Kāshānī says,

> The purpose of visiting graves is for the pilgrim to attain admonition, and for the deceased to attain benefits yielded by the prayers of the pilgrims visiting his grave. Therefore, when visiting graves, one should never neglect praying for oneself and for the departed soul. The best manner of gaining admonition is for one to imagine oneself to be dead and buried in a grave, having his body decayed and dispersed, then meditate upon the fact that such a state is not remote at all.[4]

[1] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn (23:99-100).
[2] Al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā' `Ulūm al-Dīn* 6:169.
[3] *Ibid*., 6:174.
[4] *Al-Maḥajjah al-Bayḍā'* 8:292.

Al-Qurṭubī, a famous jurisprudent of the Mālikiyyah sect who lived in the seventh century of Hegira, having quoted two Prophetic traditions relating the positive effects of visiting tombs, says,

> Master scholars believe that nothing is as useful for the hearts of men as the visitation of graves, especially for the hearts that have become polluted and are in need for a cleansing—a cleansing achieved by attending sermons, remembering death and witnessing the dead. However, from among all these, visiting graves is the most effective and efficient. A pilgrim must therefore sincerely intend to cleanse his soul of the pollutants that inhabit it and also seek to benefit the deceased soul by reciting the Qur'ān for it. He must also offer salutations to the dead and ponder upon the inevitability of joining them.[1]

By making notice of the aforesaid discussions, it becomes clear that visiting graves has the following major effects:

1. It is a prime source of admonition which wakes a person up from the deep slumber of negligence so that he may protect himself against the treachery of this temporal world. He thereby understands that the best investment for the Hereafter is piety and abstinence from sinning.

2. Remembrance of death in itself is a vital factor for spiritual revitalization and rebirth of the heart. In Islam, such a constant focus upon the Hereafter is probably the third main defense a person has against sinning and temptation,

[1] *Al-Tadhkirah* 1:25-26.

ranked right after an individual's consciousness of God's existence, and his consciousness that the whole world is constantly present before its Lord.

3. It erodes the non-divine inclinations and wishes of men. We find various warnings against unfettered desires and unjustified wishes in many Islamic texts. Remembrance of death and visitation of graves wash away such inclinations from hearts.

4. It causes removal of pollutants from hearts. This is one reason why religion has placed such importance upon and promised rewards for such acts as visiting the sick and sympathizing with them, attending funeral ceremonies and comforting the families of the dead, remembering death in general, pondering over the interrogation of the two angels in the grave (*Munkar and Nakīr*) and visiting graves.[1]

In addition, we must not forget the extraordinary importance of sermon No. 221 of *Nahj al-Balāghah*. This particular sermon of Imam ʿAlī ibn Abī-Ṭālib (ʿa) starts with the first two verses of Sūrah al-Takāthur (No. 102).[2]

Commenting on this sermon, Ibn Abi'l-Ḥadīd, a famous scholar and commentator of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, says,

> By God, I studied this sermon more than one thousand times over a period of fifty years, and every time I read it, I felt its authority permeating the totality of my being. I know of no other text as powerful as this.

[1] *Jamāl al-Akhbār*, pg. 193.

[2] "Abundance diverts you, Until you come to the graves." The Holy Qur'ān (102:1-2).

He then goes on to cite some poetic verses and fables about death and the deceased.[1]

Here we will cite two interesting stories about people who have recommended visitation of tombs as an act leading to spiritual ascension:

First Story

Shaykh Bahā'ī narrates that he once went to a holy sage who had taken up residence in a graveyard in the city of Iṣfahān. This Gnostic sage narrated one of his own experiences to the Shaykh, saying,

I witness strange events in this graveyard. One day, I saw a group of people bringing the shrouded corpse of their deceased loved one for burial here. They placed him in one of the prepared graves and, after the burial ceremony ended, they left the graveyard to continue with their respective trappings. Not long after they had dispersed, I sensed a most delightful aroma filling the air. I looked around to investigate its source, but to no avail. Suddenly, I saw a beautiful young man, radiant with a divine aura, approaching the grave of the newly buried corpse. Upon reaching the grave, he sat beside it and soon after disappeared, as if he had descended into the grave itself. I was still flabbergasted by this event that another smell caught my attention. This one was quite the opposite of the previous scent I had experienced. It was a severe stench, more disgusting than any other I had ever smelt. I looked around and saw a vicious dog, following the same path as that of the youth I

[1] *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* 11:153.

had seen before. This fiendish beast continued its trek until it too reached the same grave and subsequently descended into it. My astonishment at this otherworldly sight knew no limits, but this was only the start of this bizarre event.

Only a few moments had passed when the young man I had witnessed before ascended from this grave, bruised, beaten and bloodstained. Then, I saw him leave the gravesite, apparently returning to wherever he had previously come from. I followed him, plump with a heart full of questions.

Upon catching up with him, I begged him to explain what had just come to pass. He said, 'I am the manifestation of the good deeds of this man and I had come to accompany him on his journey hereon. That dog was however the personification of his sins and transgressions, which too had returned upon him so as to torture and molest him. I tried to protect the man from this dog but its strength was far beyond mine. The dog bit me and ripped open my flesh until I could no longer fight it, and thus I fled, leaving the man to fend for himself.'

Having hearing the sage's story, Shaykh Bahā'ī remarked,

> "You have spoken the very truth, because we indeed believe that a person's deeds manifest themselves through appropriate shapes according to the nature of the deeds."

Second Story

The late Ayatollah Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Gulpaygānī is quoted as saying:

My teacher in the Gnostic path of self-purification had instructed me to spend Thursday and Friday nights[1] in the *Takht-e-Folad* graveyard of Iṣfahān. I had been instructed to spend these particular nights in contemplation and meditation about death, its inevitability and the state of the soul in the Hereafter. My usual routine was such that I would spend about two hours of these nights thinking and pondering over the said issues, then I would rest for a few hours and subsequently, wake up for the pre-dawn prayers. I would end the night with supplications and the ritual Morning Prayer. After this, I would head back to Iṣfahān. One winter night during one such meditative session, the wind was particularly cold and the ground was covered with snow. I was busy having a bite to eat when I saw a funeral brought in from Iṣfahān for burial in the said graveyard. A young man sat beside the shrouded body and began reciting Qur'ānic verses so that when morning dawned, they could bury the dead body. Thereupon, I saw the angels of retribution descend upon the deceased. They began punishing him with inexplicable severity. They bore colossal maces of fire, such that when raised up their flames would lick the skies, with which they tormented the deceased man for his sins. Excruciating cries of anguish filled the graveyard, shaking it to the core, but the young reciter continued his recitation completely unaware of this event.

Upon witnessing this situation I became so disturbed, losing all control over myself; so, I sought to flee the scene

[1] According to the Islamic lunar calendar, nights precede days; thus, Friday night is the night before the Friday morning.

immediately. I begged the gatekeeper to open the graveyard doors for me so that I could return to Iṣfahān. He tried to prevent me from leaving at night, warning me of the cold and the wolves, but it was simply not possible for me to stay there after what I had seen.

Somehow or the other, I found my way back to the city alive, but I became severely ill and it took me another week before I could recover my health.[1]

These two stories may be enough lessons of admonition, although such true stories about people who sought spiritual purification by visiting graves are numerous well recorded in books related to the topic of the Hereafter.

Saʿdī, the famous Iranian poet, composed these couplets:

> Don't seek the freshness of youth among the old and feeble,
> For water once passed does not return to the stream,
> When your life crosses forty years of age,
> Then don't lament, for the time of lamentation has passed,
> Now there is no use of wishes and desire,
> For the time of wishes has reached its end,
> Those who know the matters of the unseen,
> Come and gaze upon our graves,
> Alas, that the season of youth is no more,
> Alas, that it was wasted in idle lusts,
> Alas, that we remained preoccupied by all things vain,
> Alas, that we remained far from the truth, in darkness,

[1] *Ma'ad Shanasi* 1:140.

> O' young men, grab at the opportunity at hand,
> For tomorrow youth will not return to you,
> These two couplets of mine burnt through his heart,
> He who used to say to *Rabāb*,
> Alas, that you lived without us,
> Now go O' dust and you may blossom once again,
> But the month of *Tīr*, or *Dey*, or *Ardebehesht*,
> Come and go and we remain but dust.[1]

Al-Rāzī says,

> 2. The pilgrim understands that people are attracted towards, and drawn to, visiting the graves of great scholars who were ascetic in their piety. It is as if that scholar had never died. In contrast, no one visits the tombs of great kings and rulers; and with all their wealth and power, it is as if they had never lived. He now begins to understand that religiosity is the source of fame and favor even in this world, let alone the Hereafter, and that a secular and materialistic life causes one to be disgraced and forgotten even in this world, let alone the Hereafter. All this leads the pilgrim to move closer to piety and further away from worldliness.

Another very important advantage of visiting graves is that the pilgrim becomes attracted to religion. This is because he observes that no one ever visits the graves of the corruptly rich and tyrannically powerful, and their resting places lie wasted and in ruins with no one to pray for them. However,

[1] *Bostan e Sa'adi*, pg. 186.

the sacred resting places of saints, great scholars and other pious individuals are always the focus of peoples' attention, and they readily flock to these sites for pilgrimage. It is from this that the pilgrim begins to understand that the only wealth that remains of a man after his death is piety and righteousness, and that these characteristics, coupled with religion, are of more value even in this temporal world. The pilgrim then begins to comprehend that when religion holds such clear existential supremacy over the apparent riches and power of this world, one can only imagine the extent of its supremacy over these vain things in the Hereafter. This realization leads the pilgrim to greater interest in religion and breaks the bounds that bind him to the trappings of this world.

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, in his exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān, says,

> People have always visited the graves of the martyrs and have always held great respect for these hallowed sites.[1]

Saʿdī says,

> O you cage, made of bones,
> Your life is a bird called: *nafs,*
> And if the bird breaks through this cage,
> It frees itself forever, never to be caught again,
> Hold on to this moment for temporal life is but a whisper,
> But this whisper is most valuable for the wise of heart,

[1] *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* 4:165.

> Alexander who ruled over the world,
> A single moment overtook him and the whole world slipped from his hands,
> This world was of no use to him,
> The only opportunity they gave him was a moment long,
> They all left and each one shall eat what he sows,
> Nothing remains here of them but their good or bad name.[1]

Al-Rāzī continues to say,

> 3. One often understands humanity as being subordinate to the all-encompassing authority of the Divine, and this occurs for a host of reasons. But this knowledge is almost simultaneously overshadowed by the apparent pomp and power of worldly kings, who are seemingly beyond the reach of this authority. However, when a pilgrim witnesses a tomb, his mind is swiped clear of such confusions and he begins to comprehend that none can escape the might of the Almighty.

The third benefit that al-Rāzī presents deals with matters of belief and ideology. He says that an individual understands, through intellectual proof, that God is a Necessary Existence; therefore, He is the true Cause of all possible existences and He has total authority over all of them in a way that we say, "there is no one truly *influential* over existence except God."

[1] *Bostan e Sa'adi*, pg. 188.

All other existences, apart from Him, are possible existences, and consequences of Him. As such, their whole existence is dependent upon Him. Thus, we know that intellectual arguments to this effect prove that all things are subservient and subordinate to His authority and control.

However, when we look at the world around us, we see people intoxicated by the riches, power and authority of this world, and in being so, stand in direct opposition to God. So, what we understand through irrefutable intellectual proof seems to be negated by that which we see and experience around us. This creates confusion and doubt in the hearts of people; but when they visit graveyards, their vision becomes clear and their hearts are not plagued by doubt anymore, for they see that in the end every tyrant, every monarch, and every tycoon who, during his temporal life, sought to place himself above God and His authority, are now rotting helplessly between piles of earth. No one can thus escape the Divine judgment.

The visitation of graves clarifies a person's beliefs and removes the discrepancy between theoretical and practical aspects of life. Through this practice, an individual's senses become aligned with his intellect and they help the latter solidify its logical stances on issues that form the foundations of his beliefs.

It is noteworthy that the first two benefits presented by al-Rāzī were purely ethical; while this one is ideological. Although writers commonly give precedence to ideological matters over ethical ones, al-Rāzī did the opposite. One may therefore argue that this third point should be placed above the first two. However, we must understand that even though ethical issues rest on the foundations created by ideologies,

the relationship between these two is not entirely linear. It is also possible to move in the opposite direction, i.e. from morality to ideology, for at every step of the way they rest upon and complement each other towards the completion of a final whole.

If one observes the tenets of good moral behavior and purifies himself ethically and spiritually, his ideological roots necessarily become stronger and more resilient compare to one who is simply satisfied with intellectual proof. Similarly, one who is inflicted with moral decadence or negligence will find his ideological core under attack and his belief structure will therefore remain weak and defenseless. In my conception, the relationship between morality and ideology is most probably cyclical, i.e. they both continuously strengthen and complete each other; therefore, the sequence presented by al-Rāzī is still acceptable.

Al-Rāzī continues to say,

> As for the benefits associated with the saint to whom a tomb belongs,[1] we shall mention three...
>
> 1. Whenever a pilgrim binds himself spiritually to a saint, and after this bonding focuses his attention towards God, the obstacles between his heart and the Divine are diminished and he is exposed spiritually to the magnificence of the Divine glory and beauty. As this happens, the pilgrim's soul reflects some of this

[1] ***Translator's note***: These advantages are relevant to any deceased individual whose grave may be visited by a pilgrim.

> heavenly grace onto the soul of the saint through whom the pilgrim achieved spiritual ascension, much like the rays of the sun when they reflect off a pool of water and fall upon a roof.

In this section of his treatise, al-Rāzī continues his discourse by listing three benefits attained by the departed soul when visited in its grave.

The first of these advantages is that the departed soul gains access to a special kind of divine grace, not available to it otherwise. When a pilgrim visits a gravesite, he prays and supplicates to God with unique sincerity. This removes numerous veils of spiritual darkness, which had previously formed barriers between him and Divine grace. Through the removal of these obstructions, the pilgrim is showered by the glory and blessing of the Divine. It is here that the deceased soul becomes a partner in the pilgrim's good fortune. This happens because the deceased soul forms an existential union with the pilgrim due to the latter's proximity to its grave. Herein the pilgrim, being the prime subject of God's blessings at the moment, reflects a portion of these blessings unto the departed soul like a mirror reflecting rays of light.

A Prophetic tradition reads,

> Your deeds are shown to the dead from among your relatives.[1]

When a person visits a grave, his prayers automatically reach the person buried there, even if the pilgrim only prays for himself and not for the deceased.

[1] *Al-Tadhkirah* 1:79.

Al-Rāzī continues,

> 2. A spirit when divorced of its bodily captivity attains completion and purification. When a pilgrim's soul binds with such a sublime spirit, both act as mirrors unto one another, and when one becomes the focus of Divine grace, the other too receives this illumination. The words of Allah the Almighty refer to this phenomenon thus:
>
> "If he is of those of the right hand, there will be the salutation by those of the right hand: Peace be on you.[1]"

The second benefit gained by the soul of the deceased is when the pilgrim achieves spiritual union with it. This leads the two to act as mirrors unto one another and everything that is reflected onto one of them automatically finds its way onto the other. While talking of the first advantage, our focus was on the excellence achieved by the pilgrim, how he is able to successfully attract and direct the flow of Divine grace towards himself through sincere supplication and prayer. This Divine grace however partially ricochets off the pilgrim and falls upon the soul of the deceased that has gained union with the pilgrim due to his proximity with the resting place of the latter's body.

In contrast, when speaking of the second advantage, we consider the excellence of both sides and not just that of the pilgrim alone. Thus, we say that both act as brilliantly reflective mirrors continuously reflecting the rays of heavenly grace upon one another, while in the first case this reflective process was one-sided and not mutual.

[1] Sūrah al-Wāqiʿah, Verses 90-91.

Another critical difference between the two cases is that even though in the first instance we spoke only of heavenly grace attracted by the pilgrim towards himself through sincere prayer, in the second case the pilgrim and the soul of the deceased share with each other all the blessings, grace and knowledge that they hold within themselves, without exception.

Al-Bayḍāwī, an exegete of the Holy Qur'ān, says,

> "Incorporeal and immaterial entities are like mirrors facing one another."[1]

By '*facing*' he means that there exists no obstruction between the *seen* and the *seer*.[2]

We have already proven that there are no obstructions existing between incorporeal entities and, similarly, they are not obstructions for one another,[3] (because the whole idea of an obstruction between a *seer* and a *seen* exists when we speak of material entities, all of which inherently rely on the reflection of light so as to see or be seen. Thus, for entities outside the material realm, the concept of visual or even spatial obstruction is meaningless, for they are not bound by the restrictions and requirements of material beings). Thus, during the visitation of graves, the pilgrim and the deceased both benefit substantially.

Then onwards, al-Rāzī cites the following Qur'ānic verse:

[1] *Anwār al-Tanzīl* 2:559.

[2] *Majmua Musanafaat-e-Sheikh Ishraq* 2:134.

[3] *Ibid.*, 2:140.

> If he is of those of the right hand, there will be the salutation by those of the right hand: Peace be on you.[1]

Through this verse, he seeks to show that *the people of the right hand* are present existentially in front of each other and salutations are exchanged between them freely. He also seeks help from the verse that reads:

> ...(Nothing) other than the salutation: Peace, peace.[2]

It should be mentioned, however, that scholars have had disagreeing opinions about the exegesis of these two Qur'ānic verses. Some believe that these salutations occur at the point of death while others argue that they will occur on the Day of Judgment. Some believe that the pronoun in verse No. 91 relates to the Holy Prophet (ṣ), while others take it to be pointing towards one of *the people of the right hand.* Some other scholars have also used this verse to establish that the rank of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) is above that of *the people of the right hand*.[3]

As for al-Rāzī in his exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān, he does not explain this verse in any great detail. However, when commenting upon Sūrah al-Fajr (No. 89), he says,

> The sacred spirits are loosely comparable to brilliant mirrors, in the sense that when they attain proximity with one another they act as mirrors placed facing one

[1] Sūrah al-Wāqiʿah (56:90-91).

[2] Sūrah al-Wāqiʿah (56:26).

[3] *Tafsīr Abu'l-Futūḥ al-Rāzī* 11:29; *al-Jāmi` li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* 17:233; *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* 4:165.

another. In being so, they are able to communicate all that they hold of knowledge and divine blessings onto each other. Thus, every image that is present in one of these mirrors automatically appears in the other. In summary, this proximity between two souls leads to the perfection of their respective virtues and simultaneously helps them gain mutual ascension. Thus, the verse: "If he is of those of the right hand, there will be the salutation by those of the right hand: Peace be on you,"[1] seeks to explain this very connection and its existential results in the form of spiritual ascent.[2]

As for the third benefit, al-Rāzī says,

> 3. A soul separated from its body is subject to manifestations, which is impossible for a soul still occupied by bodily existence to access. Since gnostic and realized knowledge, if better and more comprehensively attained by a spirit cleansed of its bodily preoccupations, binds with such a sublime soul, it makes it possible for a pilgrim's spirit to gain access to understandings otherwise beyond his reach.
>
> As was mentioned before, the liberated soul (freed from bodily restraints) has knowledge of *particularia*; therefore, it continues to be strongly connected to those particular pieces of its earthly existence that have remained behind in the grave of the body.

[1] Sūrah al-Wāqi`ah (56:90-91).

[2] *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* 31:179.

> Whenever a living human gains connectivity to these particulars, connectivity with the liberated soul becomes possible. Thus, it is but natural that some of the illumination attained by this disengaged spirit reflects unto its earthly partner through this spiritual connection.

To explain the third benefit gained by the deceased soul, we say that the *visited* soul (i.e. the soul of the deceased whose grave is visited by a pilgrim) is detached and divorced from its material existence, while the *visiting* soul (i.e. the pilgrim's soul) is attached to material form. Each one of these two has unique facets that make it more complete than the other. As for the detached soul, it is no longer restricted by the constraints of a body and thus there exists no limit to the amount and depth of knowledge that it can realize in itself (because it is an incorporeal entity). Similarly, souls attached to material bodies are subject to obstructions and veils, which hinder the efficient realization of knowledge within their entities; however, when divorced of a material body, these souls are readily able to accept the epiphany and manifestation of knowledge within themselves.

On the other hand, a soul attached to a body exists in part as a material entity and is therefore able to grow and attain ever higher degrees of perfection. This is because growth and ascension are kinds of movement and every movement essentially requires two things to occur: unrealized potential (i.e. potential that can be converted to reality in terms of action or disposition) and a vessel bearing this potential as it seeks to move from one point to another. Both these characteristics are exclusive to material forms and not possible for an incorporeal entity devoid of any kind of

material appendage or extension. This is one of the reasons why we believe that in the Hereafter, if ascension and perfection are to continue for the human soul, then a body of some sort (be it *ideal* or *purgatorial*) is necessarily required, and the existence of such a form is not beyond reason.

Whatever the case maybe, the soul of a pilgrim, due to its attachment to material form, is able to attain perfection through movement that translates its potentials into realization, and this ability represents *perfection*. The detached soul lacks this perfection, even though we might be able to conceive over perfection for it, that is not possible for the pilgrim's soul (an example of which has already been discussed).

Now, keeping in mind what we had established in Chapter Two (wherein we said that the deceased incorporeal soul has knowledge of *particularia* as well as *generalities*), we can easily understand that the detached soul retains, to some extent, the connection it had with the material of its body, even after the death of the latter, and also continues to have knowledge of it.

Thus, whenever a pilgrim or a visitor comes in proximity with the buried material of this soul's body, the soul becomes aware of the presence of this visitor. This happens because the visitor's soul is directly connected to the earthen material of the detached soul's body when it comes into contact with its grave, and simultaneously, the detached soul too, continues to be connected with the earthen material belonging to its buried body; therefore, the earthen material of the gravesite forms a bridge connecting these two incorporeal entities (i.e. souls) with each other and through this they form a unique union with one another. The result of

this union is that both souls are able to acquire the benefits attached to the unique states they enjoy in themselves, benefits not available to either of them in isolation from one another. The pilgrim soul and the *visited* soul, thus absorb the perfection of the other, and as a consequence, achieve greater ascension.

As for our final word and declaration, it is but this: "All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds."[1]

[1] Tradition ending statement denoting that all scholarly discourses and academic efforts are but preambles aimed to achieve a state wherein a person gains knowledge of God, the natural result of this knowledge being that he inevitably attributes all possible praises to that One and Solitary Perfect Being.

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